BIBLE STUDY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL DRAMATICS

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Biblical Drama Series
HELEN L. WILLCOX, Associate Editor

Bible Study Through Educational Dramatics

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THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD

To use the dramatic method in the teaching of the Bible intelligently we must first be able to select material for dramatization wisely, then to judge of its suitability to the pupils' different stages of development, and, lastly, to determine the dramatic form to which the material is best adapted and the method of preparing and directing it which will be appropriate to both material and players. This manual, therefore, is arranged in three sections, corresponding to these requisites. Part One deals with general principles of selection; Part Two with adaptation of material to the different departments of the Church School; and Part Three with methods of preparation and direction.

The principles and methods here outlined are equally applicable to any type of dramatic work that aims to be truly educational; but the illustrations are generally drawn from biblical literature.

It should be added that the term "educational" is here used in its broadest significance, meaning that which develops the whole nature, both character and personality. *The dramatic method of teaching* is advocated as one which, through self-expressive activity, *develops the capacities and qualities which it is the function of religious education to foster.*

PART ONE

CHOICE OF MATERIAL

CHAPTER I

DRAMATIC VALUES

THREE questions should be asked with reference to any biblical passage or incident which is being considered as dramatic material: First, Has it inherent dramatic values? Second, Has it an ethical or religious message for the Christian Church, and for the world to-day? Third, Is it appropriate, in subject matter, form, and teaching, to the stage of development of the persons who are to handle it? In other words, we must judge this material by a threefold criterion: dramatic, religious, and educational.

We find dramatic values in the Bible in varying degrees and different combinations. There are in this great body of literature certain stories that contain in themselves all the elements of dramatic effect; in fact, all the elements necessary to make a play. The story of Joseph and his brothers is perhaps the most notable example. There are other stories which have some of these elements in their original form and to which a dramatist can easily add the essentials that are lacking. There are others that offer a playwright only a suggestion—a momentary vision of a soul at grips with fear, with remorse, with hope, with self, or with the angel in the dawning; a vague hint of some high sacrifice; a sudden revelation of the pattern of destiny. What, then, are the essential elements of dramatic effect, those qualities and factors which may serve us as a touchstone to determine whether such and such a biblical narrative is or is not potential drama?

I. *Characters.* Whatever elements of drama may be neglected or discarded by one and another school of playwriting, it is generally conceded that a play deals with *persons*. These persons are sometimes only types, or symbols, as in allegorical drama; and sometimes they are marionettes; at other times they are portraits of historical personages drawn true to life and again, creations of the playwright's fancy. But, whatever their nature, and however represented, they are the stuff of which the play is made. Where the so-called lower orders of creation are introduced, they are humanized to some extent as in "The Wolf of Gubbio"; and when the gods descended from Olympus to the Attic stage, they appeared in the image of man. Even the half-elfin creatures of Celtic folk-lore become more than half human in the plays of Mr. Yeats. Human beings, then—"folks"—are the material of the dramatist

and of the child who "plays" the stories of King Arthur and bold Robin Hood.

In the child's story-play, and in the dramatist's creation, there is almost invariably one personage who is the center of interest throughout. This dramatic "hero" may not always prove to be the most interesting or most admirable person in the play, but he is the pivot on which the plot revolves, the connecting link between the other characters, the unifying force. The main theme or message of the play is set forth in terms of his problem; and the cessation of his struggle, whether by defeat or victory, is the natural ending of the play.

The principal qualification of a hero is perhaps not so much that he should be heroic as that he should be intelligible to the majority of other human beings. Children and very young persons, it is true, demand a certain amount of genuine heroism in a hero. There follows, at least with many, a highly individualized period during which the most interesting person is the most peculiar—even eccentric. Unfortunately, many plays are written by young people in this state of mind, but, even though a few of them may be produced, they are not the plays that live. The majority of us wish to feel, regarding the "hero" and his experiences: Yes, I have felt just that; or, That is what I should have done; or, If ever that experience should come to me, that is the way in which I should try to meet it, or else, I should hope not to meet it in that way, but I can see how circumstances might be too much for me, as they were for him. That is, we like to understand our hero. Possibly the first question, then, for us to ask with reference to a biblical character whom we are considering as a possible hero is this: Can he be made intelligible to the average person? Will the players, in the first place, and the audience, in the second place, be able to understand and sympathize with his desires, temptations, aspirations, struggles? It is hardly necessary to add that this central figure may be either man or woman, boy or girl.

Opposite to this character in the action is generally one who in some way interferes with his interests and activities. This interference is not necessarily the result of actual hostility. In the case of light comedy it may be through an innocent misunderstanding which causes amusing situations and in the case of serious drama it may be through sincere but mistaken convictions. In other words, it is not necessary that every serious play should have the technical "villain" of melodrama. In fact, the "opposing force" is sometimes not another personality at all, but merely a force within the nature of the "hero" himself, which works against the fulfillment of his nobler purposes. This sort of combination of hero and villain in one person, however, naturally requires more skill

and subtlety on the part of the playwright and would hardly be attempted by the novice.

In addition to these two there may be almost any number of persons of more or less importance to the story. There are those who support, encourage, or assist the hero and those who perform similar functions, possibly, for the opposition. Such assistance may be in the form of marching armies, or it may be only the quiet sympathy of a confidential friend. Moreover, certain of the so-called minor characters may serve as a medium through which the principal actors in the piece make known their inner experiences to the audience.

When dramatic expression is being utilized as a factor in moral and religious education, it is doubtless of greater value to deal with characters that are actual human beings rather than with allegorical abstractions. The Morality Play has its place and, when well done, may have a very strong appeal; but in order to make it really impressive it is probably necessary that the parts should be played by artists. The fact that one who has seen it could never forget Edith Wynne Matthison's playing of the part of *Everyman* does not mean that the mediæval allegory will be effective in the hands of a group of amateurs. And it must be added that the modern Morality Play seldom approaches this in power.

II. *Plot.* The characters in any drama, or dramatic story, are naturally related to each other in certain definite ways, and it is the changes in these relationships, generally speaking, which go to make up the plot. It is not necessary here to outline different types of plot, since in most cases of biblical drama the actual story, or at least a suggestion of it, is provided in the material with which we start. This is merely an attempt to guide the seeker for dramatic material in the literature known to us as the Bible. What should we look for as essential plot elements?

There seems to be little doubt that the first of these essentials is conflict in some form. This obviously need not be physical combat. David's meeting with Goliath has less of essential dramatic value than his long conflict with the jealousy of Saul, in many incidents of which there was not even an attempt at violence. The conflict may even be not completely personalized. The hero's struggle may be against some social force: a superstition, a convention, a tradition, a political or economic system, an ecclesiastical tyranny. Elijah on Mount Carmel is fighting not Jezebel alone, but the idolatry of his time. Again, the conflict may take place between two passions or affections in the hero's nature. Where the question concerns two fundamental loyalties, each of which should be held inviolable, we have the elements of tragedy.

In the working out of any conflict there is almost certain to be sus-

pense, and this element also is essential to drama. For serious dramatic effect, however, it is not sufficient simply that there be suspense; the issue must be acknowledged by the players and the audience to have significance. Those who watch the play must come to *care* what the ending is to be. This means, almost invariably, that the suspense must be concerned with matters of human relationships, the action of human wills. Melodrama may be satisfied with suspense of a merely elemental sort, of which the resolution apparently depends on chance. A man is about to fire at a squirrel on the side of a tree. Behind the tree, invisible to the sportsman and unconscious of his danger, stands a man. Will the man move within range of the gun before the hunter pulls the trigger? This sort of thing—the stock-in-trade of the serial motion-picture plays—has no legitimate place in serious drama.

There are stories in the Bible which offer the dramatizer the raw material for this kind of suspense, but it must not be mistaken for genuine dramatic suspense. If, for example, the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites in flight from Egypt could be completely dramatized (and all things seem possible to the motion pictures), a high degree of suspense would doubtless be produced at the moment when the children of Israel entered the empty basin. Will the waters rush back upon them and destroy them? (It is a strange fact that a previous knowledge of the story on the part of the audience does not entirely destroy the emotional effect of suspense, if the playing is well done.) A still more intense moment would occur when Pharaoh and his chariots followed his runaway slaves into the treacherous depths. Here the suspense would be accentuated because the audience would know that Pharaoh and his army were eventually to be swallowed up and the uncertainty as to just when the cataclysm was to occur would create a high tension in the nervous system of many of the spectators.

But this is an elemental emotion, occupied almost wholly with the physical, exciting a kind of horror in the case of some highly impressionable minds, and a morbid curiosity in others.

Contrast with this the type of suspense which is inherent in the scene in which Joseph receives his brothers for the second time in Egypt and demands that Benjamin be left behind. The moment when Joseph, having sent the attendants from the room, turns to face the brothers who had sold him into slavery and are now completely in his power—here, indeed, is dramatic suspense of the highest order. Here we have a human being with power to bring vengeance, if he will, upon fellow beings who have cruelly wronged him but between whom and himself there are strong ties of blood. He is shaken by the tumult of emotions.

Which passion will possess him—the noble or the base? Here is suspense which, to be sure, may not produce in the average spectator the actual "thrills" so often promised on the billboards of melodrama, but which, on the other hand, retains its fascination. Indeed, the significance of it grows upon us. It is not only Joseph's struggle; it becomes, as we recall it to our minds in quiet moments, the struggle of all humanity. How should we, ourselves, have acted had we been in Joseph's place? Which is the stronger and the braver thing in us, our sense of personal rights or our power of forgiveness, of returning good for evil?

If true dramatic suspense results from uncertainty as to human action, it naturally follows that the resolution of that suspense is, in most cases, dependent upon *decision;* and here we have a third essential of dramatic effect. The mere act of decision, however, does not of itself make drama. The choice must be felt to have importance.

In the ninth chapter of the second book of Samuel there is sketched a very dramatic scene. After the long delayed accession of the young King David, the one remaining member of the family of Saul, long his jealous and persistent enemy, is brought before him to learn his fate. David returns to him his father's lands and orders him to be treated as a guest in the palace.

Considering this as a possible scene in a play about David (and it is not likely that a play would be written about Mephibosheth as a central figure), the importance of the king's decision lies not only in its significance to the man whose life hangs in the balance, but also in the evidence that it gives of David's character in his new rôle of sovereign. We see that he has not, in being exalted to the kingship, lost his poise, his wisdom, and his mercy. David's choice here is surely of sufficient importance to make the decision of the very essence of drama.

In such a scene as this a skillful playwright will, of course, make the most of the element of *contrast* inherent in the situation. He will make clear, perhaps by ominous whisperings among the king's attendants, what is to be expected from the average Oriental monarch under such conditions. He may even present Mephibosheth himself, before the interview, possessed with dread of his approaching fate. The surprise of David's kindness and generosity will thus be enhanced.

It should be noted here, however, that the effect of contrast would not be destroyed by preparing the minds of the audience for the decision which David actually makes. If the audience is led to expect a cruel fate for Mephibosheth, then the king's decision creates the effect technically known as "surprise." But this effect is, generally speaking, one of the hall-marks of melodrama. In serious drama the audience is more

often taken into the confidence of the dramatist, at least to the extent of being allowed to look in upon the hero's inner struggle at some crucial moment. In this case we may surmise that the playwright, in addition to the mutterings of vengeance from the lips of smaller men, would also let us overhear David himself, in confidential talk with one he trusted, thus making clear the motives that were influencing him and possibly the strength of the passions involved. In fact, the opening verse of the chapter gives us the basis for such a fictitious conversation.

Such preparation for a climax, moreover, gives the dramatist opportunity to develop still another of the essential elements of serious drama: the *logic of cause and effect* in the moral realm. Let us assume, for the purpose of our illustration, that this incident is the climax of a one-act play. An important part of the dramatist's work will be to make the king's decision intelligible to us; to make us feel, after witnessing the play, that it could not have ended otherwise, that some power stronger than the king himself at that moment decreed that he should act thus and not otherwise. Of this determining power the Moslem fatalist may be content to say, "Kismet: it is destined." And the Calvinist may be satisfied in much the same way. The Greeks visualized it as the triple Fate: the three mysterious sisters spinning, weaving and cutting the thread of human life. Even the Hebrews, in their older poetry, sometimes expressed a kind of fatalism. The stars in their courses fought against Sisera, sang the prophetess.

The modern world (the Western world, at least) requires in serious drama a more scientific interpretation of matters the ancients were satisfied to ascribe to Fate. Modern drama might be classified in three main groups according to the general basis of interpretation followed. First, there is the group which takes as theme the idea expressed in the Decalogue in these words: "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." This idea, in the form of the theory of heredity, was very prominent in the serious drama of the period dominated by Ibsen and Strindberg. More recent is the insistence on the view that environment is the chief molding force in the lives of men. Both of these emphases are doubtless of great value in rousing the conscience of society to a sense of responsibility for the development of the race. But ever and again through the history of drama we hear the sounding of another note. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," wrote the Hebrew seer. The idea that, after all due emphasis has been placed upon the influence of heredity and environ-

ment, man is in the end to be judged as a free agent, working out his own destiny—this idea is probably at the foundation of the greatest and most vital drama. The chord struck in Cassius's words,

> "Men at some time are masters of their fates:
> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings,"

finds a universal response in the *heart* of humanity, even when the mind is overwhelmed with apparent evidence to the contrary. Such plays as "Ghosts," "The Weavers," and "The Hairy Ape" have their own very profound interest and function at special stages in the development of a new concept in the public mind; but they are not, after all, so essentially dramatic (and therefore not so lasting in appeal) as the dramas in which we see men working out their own salvation or their own destruction.

To return to our illustration, what material does the early life of David offer to the dramatist that will aid him in establishing the logic of cause and effect as regards this particular incident? The most obvious point is David's friendship for Jonathan, the father of Mephibosheth. In fact, the narrative tells us that David inquired for some member of the family for the express purpose of showing him kindness "for Jonathan's sake." (This fact the wise dramatist would probably keep hidden from Mephibosheth and the court until after the former's audience with the king.) But aside from this motive of sentiment, consider the habits of mind which David had developed during the years of his exile from court when he was in continual danger from the enmity of Saul.

Tempted in every way, conscious of what he believed to be a divine right through his anointing by Samuel, longing doubtless to undertake the work of extending and unifying the kingdom which he knew to be possible but which Saul was unable to achieve, urged by his followers to seize the throne, he had never wavered in his loyalty to the jealous monarch, and when, in one of the most dramatic moments in the whole story, he stood in Saul's tent and looked down upon the sleeping, unprotected king, he met the temptation to end the struggle with these words: "Nay, I will not lift up my hand against God's anointed." During these years David had made certain ideals the dominating power in his life, not merely in moments of solitary meditation but in the stress and turmoil of action, in sudden crises, and in long-continued temptation. On entering into the position and power so long anticipated and so long delayed, David simply remained himself—the self evolved in years of testing. He would have been almost incapable of

acting otherwise than as he did. Here we have a man who, up to this period of his life at least, could truly say, "I am the captain of my soul."

This is not a manual on the art of playwriting and therefore it is not necessary to suggest devices by which the various effects mentioned may be developed; the intention is merely to help the beginner to recognize the essential elements of drama in any given narrative or situation, and to detect their absence from material which may be offered him for dramatization.

A further word should be added concerning the distinction between serious drama and melodrama. In the latter, the interest centers in the plot rather than in the characters, while in serious drama the chief interest lies in the "persons of the play." It follows naturally that the writer of melodrama is often tempted to use his characters as if they were chess-men on a board, being handled for the purposes of the game; their own inner experiences being dealt with only sufficiently to make the play convincing, and character development being often completely ignored. Moreover, the logic of cause and effect is not considered essential to melodrama. Minor climaxes, at least, may depend apparently on chance, or accident.

A moment's thought will suffice to make clear that melodrama has practically no intrinsic value for the ends of moral and religious education. The seeker for dramatic material in the Bible, then, should train himself to discriminate between stories in which the situation and action are truly dramatic and those which would naturally suggest the treatment of melodrama. We shall have occasion to revert to this subject in the following section and therefore will not give illustrations here.

III. *Passion.* The last of the three great essentials of drama is more difficult to define than the others, and the discernment of its presence in a dramatic piece is not to be gained, probably, from any study of textbook principles. The quality referred to is variously named as intensity, enthusiasm, or passion in the lofty sense of that word. It is the poetic touch—the quality that lifts us out of ourselves and our humdrum lives into a plane where acts, and words, seem to us more deeply significant. The dramatist perceives this subtle attribute as latent in many situations, or series of events, which may appear to the average mind as commonplace, and, if he has skill, can so arrange and interpret his material as to compel the recognition of its passionate interest in the minds of the spectators of his play. This, indeed, is the very thing that people confidently expect the playwright to do for them.

Occasionally the poetry is "given," in the very warp and woof of

his fabric. This is true where it is a quality inherent in human acts. The scene in which David receives the jar of water from the well of Bethlehem, for which he had thirsted and for which his loyal captains risked their lives, needs very little elaboration from the dramatist. David's act, when he poured the water out upon the ground, saying, "Far be it from me to drink the blood of my friends!" is of the essence of poetry and romance.

But in many cases it is by the transforming power of dramatic imagination that this quality must be supplied. The dramatist, like a crystal-gazer, looks down into the hearts of men and women and beholds the motives, the fears, the hopes, the loves that give meaning to their deeds. It will be wise for the beginner in biblical dramatization to select for first experiments those incidents in which this poetic quality is *patent*.

If we were considering biblical dramatization solely with a view to public presentations, it would be necessary to discuss at this point a fourth essential: *practicability* for production. Since our general theme, however, includes informal story-play with children, in which almost anything can be represented with the aid of young imagination, this subject will be more suitably taken up under methods of preparation and direction, in Part Three. One caution, only, may be given here. There is a tendency to confound merely spectacular effects with essential dramatic values.

Certain incidents in the story of Jacob's early life afford illustrations of this danger. If a class is asked to select episodes for a pageant dealing with this period of Hebrew history, one of the scenes suggested is almost certain to be Jacob's dream of the angels ascending and descending the celestial ladder. If Paul, in his vision, saw "things which it is not lawful for man to utter," there are those who have beheld things which it is hardly legitimate to dramatize.

This is not to condemn the spectacular in its proper place. Pageantry on a large scale demands spectacular features as one of its essentials. But there are many highly spectacular scenes which do not contain the essential elements of dramatic effect and, if we are to use dramatization as a method of religious education, we must learn to discriminate between the two things. Then, if we choose a merely spectacular episode for presentation, it will be with full knowledge of its nature and a definite purpose in its use. It need hardly be said that the point of view of the extreme devotees of the Art Theater movement (that the drama is essentially and primarily a pictorial art) cannot be that of the church in utilizing drama for the ends of moral and religious education.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL VALUES

In order to determine the religious values of biblical material, it is necessary, especially in the case of Old-Testament writings, to consider the passage, or story, in question in its historical setting. Regarding the Bible as "the record of the progressive revelation of God in the hearts and lives of men," we should inquire of any part of that revelation: What was the particular need at that time for that specific revelation? For what daily problem did it offer a solution? What degree of truth were the people at that period capable of receiving? Did this prophetic message express the highest truth in this matter, from the Christian viewpoint, or did it express only the partial truth which the people were then able to perceive and accept? If there is any discrepancy between this teaching and that of the highest Christian ideals, does that discrepancy exist in the very texture of the story so that it is inseparable from it, or does it relate merely to incidental accompaniments of the historical background which can be lightly passed over or ignored in the dramatic handling of the material?

In short, just what meaning will the story in dramatic form convey to the mind of a modern Christian? Such an analysis will immediately reveal the fact that there is a considerable amount of material in the Old Testament of which the chief value for religious education to-day is that it illuminates the *method* of the "progressive revelation of God in the hearts and lives of men" and helps to convince us that the progress of that revelation is not yet stayed. It will be discovered that some of the passages most significant and encouraging to a student of this method of revelation would have comparatively little value if judged on their intrinsic merits as vehicles of Christian teaching.

It is a fact that several stories of this class in the Old Testament are essentially and intensely dramatic and therefore tempting to the playwright. But to the teacher of religion it is not sufficient that a story should be dramatic; it must have a significant message for the world to-day. Let us consider a few illustrations of this type of Old-Testament narrative.

The story of Abraham's meditated sacrifice of Isaac in response to what he believed to be the divine command is interesting to examine

from this standpoint. Studied in its proper historical setting, it is seen to have tremendous significance. The patriarch was alone, except for his immediate household, in the midst of pagan tribes who worshiped strange gods demanding human sacrifice. He was very possibly taunted by his neighbors with a lack of sincerity in his devotion to his own tribal deity, because he offered up no human life upon his altar. Being a man desirous above all things of pleasing God in his own life, he doubtless began to ask himself, "Am I truly single-hearted toward Jehovah? Would I give him my dearest possession if he asked it of me?"

Meditating thus in anxious solitude, at length he came to believe that God indeed required the sacrifice of his son Isaac. With a breaking heart, he hastens to obey. Then comes the revelation of God's will in truth, and Abraham and his descendants stand among their less enlightened neighbors, forever unshaken in their conviction that Jehovah their God requires not the sacrifice of human life. The story as we have it is but the *record* of the revelation which was vouchsafed to Abraham only after he had passed through a Gethsemane of struggle and a Calvary of sacrifice. In the days when the story was first committed to writing, it doubtless had still a message of vital and immediate import to the Hebrews. In the Christian era this message is no longer needed. But the story is essentially dramatic, and therefore when the church began to present biblical literature in dramatic form—a thousand years or so after Christ—it made this subject prominent in the cycle of the "Miracles." In order to give it a Christian significance, however, it was treated as an allegory setting forth the vicarious sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. This interpretation will hardly satisfy a modern audience. It is open to question, also, whether any deep religious impression is made upon a twentieth-century audience by presenting this story in the ingenuous simplicity of form and interpretation which met the spiritual need of the ancient Jew.

A thoroughly realistic play might be based upon this theme in which would be shown with convincing power the *way* in which divine truth comes home to men; the agony, and the rapture, with which each forward step is taken. But that is another matter. The question for a teacher of religion to consider is this: What effect will a dramatic rendering of the original narrative be likely to have upon the average group of modern Christians? The obvious answer is that it deals with a religious problem which is obsolete, and therefore has no vital, universal message for the world to-day.

For a second illustration, take the story of the Golden Calf set up by Aaron in the wilderness when Moses tarried long upon the mount.

Here, again, there is material for a playwright. The wavering of humanity in every age between allegiance to the austere God of righteousness whose service is the "living sacrifice," and the short-cut religion which promises prosperity and salvation, in return for participation in the ceremonies of a cult—here is a theme for a great dramatist. But presented baldly, as it stands, without skillful and subtle interpretation to universalize its message, it is merely the record of a conflict belonging to the distant past.

The story of Jephthah's Daughter is another case in point. This is a strikingly dramatic tale (indeed, theatric might be a better word!) and has been dramatized more than once. But the story as it stands has value only in relation to the history of religion, as showing that stage in the development of the Jehovah religion when human life was held less sacred than a foolish vow. Once more it must be admitted that a dramatist might handle this theme in such a way as to suggest universal implications; but once again it must be added that the material, taken at its face value, deals with a situation that is obsolete in modern civilization. The strongest emotional reaction of a modern audience on seeing it presented dramatically would probably be a feeling of self-congratulatory satisfaction with the age in which they live. This, while pleasurable, is not the best incentive toward renewed devotion to the Kingdom.

Possibly the most outstanding illustration of the failure to balance religious and dramatic values is to be seen in the frequency with which the Book of Esther has been dramatized in recent years. The story probably comes closer to our modern conception of drama, in its structure and technique, than any other book in the Bible. In fact, it might almost seem that the play is too nearly ready-made to tempt a dramatist. A little filling in of dialogue and "business," the furnishing of necessary stage directions, and the thing is done. A writer of plays cannot read the piece without a thrill of admiration at the nicety of craftsmanship. There is, too, a sardonic humor of situation and a satiric humor of dialogue and "aside" that seem almost prophetic of Shakespeare—or is it (and this might be an interesting speculative question for the scholars) reminiscent of ancient Persian dramas witnessed during the Exile by the Jews favored in Shushan? So much (and more, indeed!) may be said for the dramatic values of Esther. But as to content, what is it but a glorification of revenge? One fancies that Shakespeare must have steeped himself in its atmosphere before writing "The Merchant of Venice." The book is a dramatic rendering of the Psalms of Vengeance. If ever the Jews desire a biblical warrant for retaliation in kind for pogroms organized by Christians, they will know well where to find it.

This is not to say that a great play of *character* could not be written on the subject of Esther; but such a play would be likely to begin where most of the dramatic versions leave off.

There is a still more delicate question to be asked with reference to a biblical story under consideration for dramatic rendering: a question not of absolute but of relative values. Suppose the story to contain no ethical elements not fully in accord with the highest Christian ideals; it may be that its meaning is set forth in terms of a philosophy that no longer controls the thoughts of men, or of an attitude of mind no longer typical of the educated man. The "sanctions of religion," which satisfied former ages, are no longer sufficient. The real problem, with the average intelligent Christian of to-day, is not whether he can *believe* in the "miracles," in the ordinary sense of that term. The fact probably is that he has seen with his own eyes so many seeming miracles—such marvels undreamed of by the ancients in their wildest flights of fancy! —that wonders in the realm of nature are no longer able *of themselves* to bring to him new conviction of the reality of divine power. The yearning of the modern religious man is for evidence of the power of the *spirit*. He wants to be convinced that through some special relationship with the Source of power, he can become the master of his fate and the captain of his soul. The average man of to-day is probably not looking for the hand of Providence to be inserted in his affairs at a moment of crisis in which he has involved himself, and to straighten out his difficulties by a sort of super magic; what he is looking for, and oftentimes with an intense and tragic craving, is the secret of unfailing contact with the Source of power. This craving finds expression in many strange sects and movements, some of which would perhaps repudiate with violence the idea that they are in any sense religious. It may be, indeed, that some of the orthodox are not so conscious of this fundamental need as some of those outside the inner fold.

Ought we not, then, to add to the question whether a certain biblical story is *acceptable* to the modern mind the question whether it is one to meet and satisfy the deepest needs of the human soul *to-day*. This is not a dogmatic ruling out of miracles. A so-called "miracle," if used as the medium for a mystical or symbolic setting forth of spiritual truth, may have great religious as well as dramatic values. Only a warning is intended, that the dramatizer should select his material with regard to the spiritual needs of his audience.

It is possible to use the same story to convey different messages, and the fact that one of these is true does not necessarily prove the others untrue. The important thing is that the person who attempts to cast a

story in dramatic form should know himself which truth (of all those possibly inherent in it) he is particularly desirous of bringing home to his audience. The story of Ruth will afford a good illustration of this problem. The book is a straightforward narrative, complete in itself, and with practically no extraneous material. In fact, it has been called by literary critics a perfect short story. Dramatization seems, at first thought perhaps, a simple matter. And, in fact, many have cheerfully attempted it who might have hesitated to handle material which appeared more complicated. It is quite likely that some of them have confused literary values with dramatic. It does not produce dramatic effect simply to present literary material in dialogue form. Morover, it is a curious fact that, while the book is entitled "Ruth," it proves, when analyzed for dramatic elements, to be actually the story of Naomi. The mother-in-law is the dominating figure throughout. It is the story of her early life that *must* be given somehow to the audience, in order that the climax may be intelligible. It is she who guides the destinies of both Ruth and herself after they reach her native land; and the strength of her character is still further brought out by the loyalty and devotion she was able to inspire in the young Moabitess.

If one attempts to make Ruth's own story the dramatic center of interest, he must ask himself, What is the exact moral or religious teaching of it, as it stands—that is, as far as the biblical narrative goes? Ruth cheerfully gives up her religion out of love for her mother-in-law. Suppose, then, it were a case of a Christian girl and, say, a Mohammedan mother-in-law. Should we be so ready to hold up for emulation the Ruth who, under those circumstances would say, "Thy God shall be my God"? If not, would we not better think carefully before we make a *religious* heroine of the Moabitish damsel? Or again, let us imagine Naomi to be a modern Christian, and Ruth a Hindu. Would the missionary on the field be easily satisfied as to the genuineness of "Ruth's" conversion?

These questions are not intended to imply censure of Ruth for her action; they are meant to suggest that the teacher who wishes to present this story in dramatic form should first make sure of the fundamental message it is to carry. When we delve somewhat below the surface of the narrative, when we study it in its historical setting, it becomes obvious that the suppositious cases with which we have compared it are in reality not parallels. The fact probably is that at the time when Ruth left her native Moab, her people had acquired not the first faint glimmering of a monotheistic faith. To their minds it was one of the accepted facts of life that each nation—each tribe—had its own gods. The

Hebrews, strangely enough, had only one, but still that one was theirs; inhabited, with them, the rocky plateau of Judea and the fertile valley of the Jordan; went with them into battle, provided they carried the sacred "Ark" wherein he resided; but had no jurisdiction over peoples or territory outside his rightful domain. In fact, we can almost hear Ruth's childhood friends gossiping about the ill fortune that had befallen the Hebrew woman in their land and commenting, half with pity, half with scorn, on the fact that she had stubbornly gone on praying to Jehovah through all these years when anyone must see that he was too far away to help her. If she had only prayed and offered sacrifice to *their* gods, now—!

Even with the Hebrews, monotheism in the true sense was still far from being established. Even though a sweet singer in Israel may have cried out in a moment of exaltation, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," the ordinary man would have regarded this as merely poetry. (In fact, he would have regarded it in much the same light in which a modern is viewed who glimpses a day when these words shall be accepted as literal truth.) No prophet had yet arisen to thunder forth: "Thus saith God Jehovah, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Or this: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

In short, when Ruth decided to accompany her mother-in-law to the land of Judah, it was as a matter of course that she accepted Israel's God. It was not the substitution of one conception of the supreme Deity for another but merely the transferring of allegiance from the god who ruled in Moab to that one who governed Judah. This fact should be brought out in any dramatic version of the story. As a matter of fact, the great religious drama for which the book of Ruth offers a suggestive theme is not yet written.

It is quite possible that at this point, or sooner, the teacher will exclaim, "Is there anything in the Bible quite safe to dramatize?" In order that the question may not rankle in the reader's mind, it may be well to give a few positive suggestions before proceeding to the next phase of the subject.

The books of Samuel and of the Kings (particularly 1 Kings 1-12) are rich in narrative material that lends itself to simple dramatization. Yet even here one must be governed in his selection by the same general

principles that have been outlined. It is noticeable that the moral teaching of the stories of the Kings after the division of the kingdom is not so clear-cut and universal in its application, generally speaking, as that of the tales of the United Kingdom.

There is striking dramatic material in the accounts of the Restoration of Jerusalem after the Exile (found in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra); but this would require more imaginative and creative work on the part of the playwright, to bring out the inherent dramatic effects than would the earlier history.

When we come to the Prophets, we find a wealth of material, both for simple treatment and for elaborate development. The former type of dramatization of this material is illustrated in *Fearless Men: Dramatizations From the Prophets;* a collection of short plays on the Prophets which forms one number of the present series. With regard to the full-length play, this part of the Bible is as yet an unworked mine. A few have bored beneath the surface and brought up treasure—enough to indicate the riches awaiting earnest seekers.

The Gospels offer to an imaginative playwright many themes that do not involve the vexed problem as to whether or not Christ should be actually presented through impersonation. The number in this series entitled *Friends of Jesus,* by Lydia M. Glover, is a convincing illustration of this fact.

The book of Acts is rich in dramatic situation and incident; and the life of Paul alone, with the further light thrown on his character by his letters, might serve as the basis for a whole cycle of plays.

The seeker for dramatic material in the Bible has no reason for discouragement, if only he is willing to exercise his creative imagination in the search, and then to guide the impulses of that imagination by certain general principles of selection. These principles, however, must come to be a part of his habitual attitude of mind; they cannot be followed mechanically, when furnished to him, as one consults a railroad time-table or a street guide. The teacher must make them his own.

Educational Values.—Since Part Two of this manual is concerned with the adaptation of biblical material to the needs of different groups in the modern organized system of religious education known as the Church School, there will be mentioned here only a few of the most general values which make a play fit to be regarded as a medium for educational dramatic work.

First in this list should come truth. To a religious teacher, this may seem an obvious thing to say; but unfortunately the truth itself is

not always so obvious. And there are many kinds as well as degrees of truth. For example, there is accuracy of detail in the *presenting* of a play: costumes, properties, settings, manners and customs, etc. This is truth—and a kind of truth which is exceedingly important for educational purposes. One of the incidental values of dramatization as a method of Bible teaching is the players' increase of knowledge and interest in the externals of life in biblical times and countries, and in the relation of these things to the development of the Hebrew religion. But it must not be supposed that the highest degree of accuracy in these matters will serve as a blanket to cover the sin of *un*truth to the human heart. For dramatic presentation, this is the essential truth. Even probability in situation and plot is less important than this. For while in the highest type of drama, doubtless, situation and event are the inevitable result and outward manifestation of character, nevertheless even frank melodrama may conceivably have moral values, provided that, in the situations in which the playwright projects his characters, they are "true to life," and to themselves. (To be sure, when the writer of melodrama succeeds in achieving this result, he puzzles the critics as to whether he has not, after all, written a "straight drama." And, indeed, it is sometimes difficult to draw the line.) On the other hand, a purely fanciful and symbolic piece, with nothing of realism in the ordinary sense, may embody essential truths of human life and character.

Moreover, even in the realistic play, realism should not be confounded with naturalism. Take, for instance, the matter of speech. The stage conventions which allowed, in Shakespeare's day, the soliloquy and the "aside," and forbid them in our own, are, after all, minor matters beside the great stage convention of all ages that allows human beings to express clearly and effectively the deepest emotions of their hearts in moments of crisis. Everybody knows that in real life we seldom do this; but one of the desires that take us to the theater is the wish to see and hear other human beings express, for us, the thoughts and feelings we have had or may have. True, the average human being, in the face of great emotions, is usually tongue-tied, and the stammering and stuttering and helpless inexpressiveness of a seventeen-year-old in love, for instance, may be represented on the stage (by the genius of a Mr. Tarkington) in such a way as to give us a vast deal of amusement and pleasure at the astonishing verisimilitude. But the same audiences who chuckle with delight over the "truth" of this naturalistic portrait will never weary of listening to Romeo's impassioned words beneath the balcony, un*natural* as it is that a lover should express himself, off-hand, in blank verse that scans perfectly. In fact, Mr. Tarkington's own romantic and

poetic drama of "Monsieur Beaucaire" will doubtless outlive any number of "Clarences" or "Tweedles." In the latter plays there is a great deal of naturalism, which is truth; in the former, there is realism, and also essential truth, of character and life.

In short, one in search of a play for educational dramatic work should not be blinded by the presence of accuracy in externals, of naturalism, or even of realism, to the absence of essential truth.

This requirement would be important if a director were thinking only of his audience, but if he is worthy the name, educational dramatic director, he will set up his standards with equal regard for the needs of his players. This consideration will lead him to select plays which, so far as possible, give to each player an opportunity for active participation in the situations and events of the story. The participation may be very slight, but it should be real. The *essential* values claimed for educational dramatic work are practically impossible of attainment in the case of a child or young person who is required to impersonate a helpless victim, for example. The director, then, who desires to utilize dramatic expression for the fuller development of his players will seek for plays in which every character has a real relationship to the plot, and some opportunity for active expression of that relationship. This may seem an ideal impossible of attainment, but it may at least be reached more nearly than is often the case with church dramatics. And, for his encouragement, the director may remember that sometimes a part which seems at first reading to offer little may, by careful guidance, be made a valid character-study in the hands of the player.

PART TWO

GRADING OF DRAMATIC MATERIAL

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMATIC INSTINCT

ONE must speak with caution and diffidence on a subject which has hardly, as yet, received serious recognition, not to mention genuine experimental research, from leading authorities in the field of education. That the dramatic method of education will receive such attention before many more years have passed is almost certain. In the meantime each worker in the field supposedly has a right to base theories on his own experience and on his observation of the work of others who appear to be successful. Indeed, judging from the number of books which have recently appeared on this subject, it would seem that the partial formulation of such theories is occurring simultaneously in the case of many. There is a sort of spontaneous combustion of speculation throughout the field. The present manual does not aspire to kindle new beacon fires in this feast of lights; but only to indicate something of the particular significance which the rediscovery of the dramatic impulse holds for the teacher of religion and ethics.

What the scientific definition of the dramatic impulse will be, no one, as yet, can say, or whether the term "dramatic instinct" will be entirely ruled out from any serious discussion of the subject. These are technical matters for the psychologist, and need not greatly concern the practical worker in the field. The teacher of religion, however, who is attempting to utilize this "instinct" for his special ends should have at least a working hypothesis as to its primary *function.* Of that, then, let us venture a very general definition.

The function of the dramatic instinct is to aid the individual in adjusting himself to his spiritual environment, as the instincts of hunger and self-preservation aid in adjusting him to his physical environment.

As the instinct of hunger stimulates the individual to satisfy certain material needs of his physical organism, so the dramatic instinct stimulates him to reach out for satisfaction of certain fundamental needs of his spiritual being. In order to live successfully, that is, abundantly, in a world peopled by other spirits of like nature to his own, the human being must *understand* these other spirits; the deeper, wider, and more sympathetic that understanding, the richer the individual's life. The dramatic imagination, which may be called the passive manifestation of the instinct in question, helps him to such understanding. But under-

standing alone does not insure the most abundant life; the capacity for expression must be added. This capacity is enlarged by actual impersonation (the active manifestation of the instinct) provided this be guided by a method which allows the instinct to function properly, and does not pervert or exploit it for irrelevant or secondary ends.

One of the first essentials of such a method will be that it follows the natural course of development of the instinct itself, and adapts both material and technique to the stage of growth of the individuals concerned. Therefore we must consider briefly the natural development of the dramatic instinct in the individual.

For our practical purpose here, it is not necessary to enter into a discussion as to the age when the dramatic impulse first manifests itself. It is enough that this is certainly below the kindergarten age; since the teacher or director will hardly be dealing with children younger than this, except as she may do so informally, in a home circle.

We may assume, then, that the dramatic instinct is present in a group of children of kindergarten age. It will naturally be more active and more highly developed in some than in others. But there are certain general facts in regard to its activities which the teacher should carefully note.

First, the normal manifestation of the dramatic instinct at this age is *individual,* not social. The child "makes believe" that he is someone (or something) other than himself, and to make the game convincing, he may at times need the assistance of another person (although in most cases inanimate objects are all-sufficient), but it is to be noted that the other person (child or adult, as it happens) is hardly more than a stage property in the mind of the principal actor. Even supposing the "other person" chances to be a child of the same age, whose own dramatic instinct is awake and endowing his impersonation of a horse or an engine with a thrilling reality, this, too, is individual, not social. The engine acquires a mysterious life of its own, and it will be more than the small engineer can compass to prevent it from steaming and puffing off on a journey of its own volition. In other words, as soon as the game is started, each child begins constructing his own dramatic environment and reacting thereto with very little regard for the other's conception of the situation.

Second, there is no *story,* no plot. There is merely impersonation, which begins whenever the idea occurs to the child and ends as soon as he tires of it, or his attention is distracted by something more interesting. There is nothing like a dramatic situation, which is developed through various episodes until it reaches a climax, and then disentangled until

it arrives at a conclusion. In other words, the five-year-old child "playing engineer" is not playing a *story* about how the engine was steaming ahead when suddenly the engineer saw a landslide right across the track in front of him, and instead of jumping to save his own life, he stuck to his post and managed to slow up the locomotive enough to save the passenger cars from being smashed, although he was badly hurt himself, but he was a hero and everybody praised him, so *that* was all right. This might be ten-year-old brother's way of playing engineer, but it is altogether too complicated for the kindergarten child when left to his own initiative. He is simply trying to find out what it feels like to be an *engineer,* not what it feels like to be a *hero* in an emergency.

To put it in still another way, the dramatic play of the small child concerns itself with static situations rather than with dynamic ones; with activities continuing without interference rather than with the interplay of forces which bring about climaxes in human affairs.

Third, the small child is as likely to impersonate an animal, or even an inanimate object, as a human being. (One wonders whether it is perhaps that "the spirit within the wheels" is one of those things revealed unto babes.) He can go further than the ancient who said, "Nothing human is foreign to me"; he feels himself akin to everything in the universe which rouses his interest. Now, while it is true that ten-year-old brother and his friends will by no means disdain to be the lions who did *not* devour Daniel, one suspects their willingness is based largely on the fact that the part calls for a glorious and soul-satisfying noise. The part of the wolf in Little Red Riding-Hood, it should be noted, is another matter altogether, for the wolf himself is impersonating humanity.

Fourth, the small child does not ordinarily play the same part continuously for more than a short time. He has not developed the power of sustained voluntary attention which his schoolboy brother has acquired to some extent, and since his play does not in itself provide change of interest, not being a story progressing from one situation with its climax to another, he simply drops that play, when weary, and turns to something else.

Fifth, there is no thought of an *audience.* The play itself is the all-sufficient motive and objective. Hence there is no concern as to time or place. The setting is the most convenient space at hand when the impulse overtakes one; and the curtain goes up at any hour o' the clock except when one is sleeping. The writer saw one evening, in the full glare of the lights of Broadway, a five-year-old boy inopportunely beset with a desire to impersonate a hen. Now, to be a hen, everybody knows

that it is necessary to assume a squatting attitude upon the ground, and then to proceed by spasmodic jerks and hops, at the same time emitting raucous and peculiar sounds of triumph. So there it was, right on the sidewalk. The parents, absorbed in talk, were unaware that five-year-old had become a hen. The real sufferer was big brother, possibly nine years old. His sense of propriety was evidently outraged. He clung desperately to the extra claw which could be spared from the "business of scratching," and tried to haul the child to a more decorous attitude, at the same time bending forward to pour distressed remonstrances into his ear. But does a hen concern itself about the remarks of humans? As the crowd engulfed them, five-year-old was still hopping, scratching, clucking, and crowing with the absolute abandon of the true artist.

These five points are of significance for the teacher who attempts to guide the activities of the dramatic instinct for educational ends.

It is hardly necessary to mention the fact that no precise age limits can be set down for the different periods in the development of the dramatic instinct; everyone knows that all children do not develop at the same rate or exactly in the same manner. Moreover (and this is doubtless especially true in the case of "instincts" or habitual attitudes of mind which are still in process of evolution in the race), the environment of the child has a great deal to do with the *rate* of development. The dramatic instinct is probably now a sufficiently racial possession so that it is latent (when not active) in every individual; but its development can be so checked and thwarted by lack of opportunity for expression, or so perverted by mistaken handling, that it becomes a danger rather than a beneficent force.

Story-Playing Period.—The amount of expression accorded to the dramatic instinct, and the material through which it seeks expression, in the years of later childhood (about eight to eleven inclusive) are largely the result of the child's environment. The number and cultural background of his playmates, the space and facilities available, the encouragement, disapproval, or indifference of parents and teachers, the reading matter he is given—all these things help to determine what he shall play, and how, and how much. In fact, during this period the instinct passes through a crisis which comes near to determining whether it shall continue to develop normally and to fulfill its natural function in youth as well as in childhood, or whether it shall be confined almost entirely to its passive manifestations, and thereby in some cases be transformed from a blessing to a menace. This danger will be considered more fully in connection with the adolescent period. It is enough for our purpose here to note that there is such a crisis, and that because of it, the dramatic

instinct calls for special culture during this period of later childhood, in order to insure its continued normal development.

The general characteristics of the activities of the dramatic instinct during this period are as follows:

First, dramatic play is now normally *group* play. It is social rather than merely individual. No worker with children of "Junior" age will need to be told that there is frequent recession from the new attitude to the old, and that when little brother (now arrived at the dignity of eight and schoolbooks, but still able to enjoy "playing engine" at times), is allowed to impersonate the locomotive which the hero-engineer is to drive, it may take some coaxing, or authority, to keep him from manifesting an unbecoming will of his own. The significant thing for us to note is that the group of older children, as a whole, have a distinct objection to such individualistic behavior, which they make known with no uncertain sound; and if little brother refuses continuously to submit to the will of the group, he will presently depart in tears, whether the pressure applied be moral or physical.

A most revealing phrase is that which one may overhear almost any day on a "Junior" playground. "I won't play!" declares Mildred, stalking tragically off across the yard. "All right, don't then!" one saucy miss throws after her, perhaps, but such defiance cannot entirely dispel the gloom that settles on the little group. Something is wrong. Mildred is spunky and selfish and generally horrid this morning; let her go; who cares? But they were going to play "The Little Princess," and they *couldn't* do it with one less person than they had, and—oh, their "set" always plays things together anyway. Half-consciously they foresee that playing "The Little Princess" will not be half so much fun with Mildred sulking indoors. So finally an emissary is sent to find her, there is a shame-faced making-up, and—Mildred is probably the Little Princess herself! (which certainly ought to cure her of the sulks!)

If it had been a purely personal quarrel between two of the girls, the making-up would probably not have followed so promptly. But in this case mere personal feelings are set aside for the sake of the *play* and the play needs the individuals as units in the group. The ten-year-old has come to know this, and well he understands the power of the simple threat, "I won't play!"

Second, the play now has a *story,* with a beginning, a climax, a dénouement. That is, we find the beginnings of dramatic structure. As to the source of their material, the children have the catholicity of a Shakespeare; and, left to themselves, an almost unerring sense for the dramatic, within the range of their interests and sympathies.

Closely related to this is the fact that there is now a *hero.* This period is so much an age of hero-worship that it might be an interesting speculative question as to whether dramatic play at this time acquires a hero because it has a plot, and there can be no plot without a hero; or whether it acquires a plot in order to provide a vehicle for the hero, who is indispensable. However that may be, the two are inseparable, and the "Junior" play is distinctly of the heroic type as a rule. Of course there are still quieter moods when the children "play house" (especially if girls predominate in the group), but even in this case it will generally come to pass that one of the children falls critically ill, and the doctor turns out to be a hero.

Third, the center of interest is mankind. As has already been suggested, when the story calls for an animal, some one of the group will be willing to take the part for the sake of the play; and cases where animals assume certain human characteristics belong in a different category. But on the whole the Junior child subscribes to Pope's dictum, that "The proper study of mankind is man."

Fourth, there is a striking increase in the amount of time which the children now spend over one story. In the first place, there is a distinct period of *preparation,* which may last from a few minutes to several days. If the story suggested is one well known to the whole group, it may take only a few moments to get the parts assigned, the setting arranged, and properties collected. On the other hand, especially in the later years of this period, days may be spent in rummaging through trunks of old clothes for suggestive bits of costuming; in making elaborate properties, such as shields and lances for King Arthur's Knights, or bows and arrows for the Merrie Men of Robin Hood. The point to be noted is that there *is* such a period of preparation, whatever its length, and that when the group begins actual impersonation, there is a fairly clear idea in the mind of each player of what is going to happen and what he has to do about it.

Moreover, one playing of the story does not always satisfy the impulse. Someone says, "Let's play it again!" And upon this suggestion there is likely to follow a brief discussion of the *way* in which it was played the first time, and how it might be improved. In the case of a story which proves to have unusual interest this process may be repeated from time to time, so that the *way* in which it is played, the things the players do, and even the words they speak, gradually become fixed in a certain form. (This is much more apt to occur during the latter part of this period than at first, and marks the transition from the story-playing to the informal episodic period.)

However long they may choose to spend on one play, the significant fact is that the children have now acquired to a considerable extent the power of sustained voluntary attention and oftentimes there is scarcely to be found an allurement, barring ice-cream or a circus, which will divert them from the business in hand.

It is very important for our purpose to note that the dramatic unit is still short. That is, the structure is episodic. There is nothing like the complicated plot of a real play. The story is told largely by action; there are no long passages of dialogue of course. The younger children are apt to choose stories that consist of hardly more than one incident, or such as can be reduced to those proportions; and while the boys and girls of ten or eleven years may play stories of some length, they present them in a series of episodes with very little care to provide for smooth transitions or interrelation of parts.

Fifth, there is still, normally, *no audience,* as such. Entertainment of others is not the motive. The observer will usually be able to classify the exceptions in such a way as to make clear that they do not affect the general principle. For example, one of the older children may have been reading of dramatic presentations celebrating the arrival of a distinguished visitor in a mediæval court. It is announced that a popular relative is to visit the family. The idea comes that they will celebrate his arrival with a play. (Interest in the preparation of the play, however, is apt to overshadow the interest of the arrival.) Or the adult members of the family, wishing to know what the children are about, may ask to be admitted. Or, again, the brother or sister in high school or college may be a member of the Dramatic Club, and the children are fired with emulation.

Such accidents of environment may, it is true, hasten the rate of development of the dramatic instinct in particular individuals or groups. Nevertheless, the teacher should remember that the audience has not normally entered as a factor into the motives or interests of the Junior child. This is indicated by the absolute freedom from stage conventions of a group of children planning a play. The different scenes may be played on opposite sides of the house. It does not occur to them as desirable to locate the action all in one place.

However, there is somewhat more feeling for *atmosphere* than in the preceding period. Scenery, properties, and costumes need be no more than suggestive, but the suggestion is desired. The little child, in his individualistic impersonations, needs nothing, or almost nothing, as an external aid to his imagination. But if one is to be Daniel Boone and lead a band of pioneers against the Indians, one really needs to borrow

big brother's sheepskin coat, and get grandmother's old beaver muff out of the attic for a cap. This much support is necessary to impress the other players with the reality of one's impersonation.

A crisis has been referred to as occurring during this period. The fact is that up to very recent times the continued development of the dramatic instinct beyond the age of eleven or twelve was the exception rather than the rule. This is easily explained. In the first place, there was the lingering inheritance of Puritan times—a tendency to regard anything connected with drama as dangerous, if not actually sinful. Even where no moral consideration was involved, the social position of the player-folk made it unbecoming for a well-brought up young person to take an active interest in the *play.* On the other hand, the educators had not begun to perceive that the dramatic instinct had any bearing on their problems and naturally took no interest in furthering its development. It is hardly necessary to add that, until within the last few years, the church was doing nothing to counteract the repressive influence of home and school in this regard.

The result was that in the vast majority of individuals the dramatic instinct was, at the beginning of adolescence, crushed back and forced to find outlet solely through its passive manifestations. This was so generally true that even fairly recent writers on pedagogy have assumed that the dramatic instinct normally dies out (having supposedly fulfilled its function!) at about ten years of age. Even in this enlightened age it is apparent that some who see great value in dramatic expression for children have as yet not perceived its peculiar significance for early adolescence.

The negative results of this educational blunder were sad enough, but there were positive results in many cases. The youth's natural curiosity and desire to try various experiences, being denied the normal and safe fulfillment of dramatic play, sought fulfillment often in dangerous experiments with the high explosive we call "real life." Moreover, many a girl in whom the dramatic instinct was too strong to be denied, mistaking this urge for dramatic *talent,* started out upon the disheartening "career" of an ungifted actress.

Because of the peculiar significance of the dramatic instinct for moral and religious education, it is incumbent upon the church to do its share in giving the special culture which the instinct needs to tide it over this period of crisis. The method of such culture will be dealt with in the next section.

Episodic Period (Informal).—The beginnings of the episodic period have already been touched upon in connection with story-playing,

which actually merges imperceptibly into this phase of development. A group of children accustomed to playing together become unusually interested in one particular story, and probably in one special scene of that story. This they play again and again, until "The Olympians" (Kenneth Grahame's delightful name for adults who have forgotten how to play) marvel that they do not weary of it. To the unenlightened it may look like mere parrotlike repetition, but it is not. It is genuine creative self-expression. Without being in the least aware of the significance of it, the child of twelve years knows intuitively that the supreme joy of playing a part is in feeling it grow, in making it, each time he plays it, more fully his own. An unsympathetic observer might notice very little difference between two successive renditions of the play; but if each individual child has added a word here, a gesture there, a dramatic pause in another place, a clearer understanding of the situation, and a deeper thrill of reality at the climax, it has been creative work; and for the development of individuality, it has possibly been of greater significance than some of the more orthodox exercises of the schoolroom.

It should be noted that there is as yet no written text to which the players are bound. (Certain typical exceptions to this have already been mentioned.) Their system is, rather, that of the famous "Comedia del Arte" of mediæval Italy, in which each actor was given the situation, the plot, a sort of scenario (presumably), and a general idea of his character, and then developed lines and "business" for himself. This analogy, however, must not be taken too seriously, for there is a vast difference. The Italian players were exponents of an *art* of great subtlety, whereas the essential value of the children's play lies in the fact that it is spontaneous and unsophisticated.

A sense of form is rapidly developing, however, at this period. The children comment on each other's lines and action, and, on the occasion of a difference of opinion, may even enter into a brief discussion of the characters. One almost has to know what sort of girl Cinderella really was in order to play the part of the Prince successfully.

More interest is shown also in the setting. Slight attention may even be given to such matters as grouping, and players are expected to "mind their cues."

Episodic Period (Formal).—The age at which the episodic period passes from the informal phase to the formal is largely dependent on environment, and the amount of "culture" which the dramatic instinct has received in the case of the group in question. This transition may occur in these days at any time from eleven years to sixteen.

This irregularity is probably due to the fact that we are living in an *age* of transition as regards educational theory and practice of dramatics. When dramatic expression becomes generally and soundly established as a branch of education, the development may be more nearly uniform—and possibly more rapid. Perhaps it will be safe to say that at present this transition normally takes place between twelve and fifteen years of age. The manner of its occurrence differs too with different groups. One group may have been especially devoted to a certain episode from Greek mythology, another to an incident in the career of Jesse James. (A mere matter of cultural backgrounds!) Be that as it may, a disagreement arises as to lines or action that threatens to break up the company. Someone exclaims, "Well, let's get the *book,* and see what it says, anyway!" From that moment "the book" becomes an essential to the play, and before long each player will probably have copied out at least his more important speeches, and may be seen at odd moments absorbed in study of a crumpled bit of paper with strange fragments of dialogue scribbled thereon.

Or, again, suppose the favorite play has chanced to be one that the children had invented for themselves. When the predestined moment comes, one of the group cries out (or more likely whispers in delicious secrecy), "Let's write it out—words, an' what we do, 'n' everything!" Then strenuous literary activity begins, and presently, "the book" has been produced out of nothing!

However it happens, the important fact is that the play is no longer absolutely free, but more or less closely bound to a fixed *form.* And the young prompter is apt to be a veritable tyrant in his insistence on verbal accuracy. There is, in fact, a real danger at this time, that dramatic play will lose in spontaneity more than it gains in finish. It is the director's business to guard against this danger. Ways of doing this will naturally fall under the general subject of methods.

Pageant Period.—An attempt to mark the development of the dramatic instinct off into definite periods, beyond the point we have now reached, can be no more than tentative. The phase here called, for convenience, the "pageant period" might be viewed as merely an advanced grade of the formal episodic period; and on the other hand, it may be regarded as the first step in the final period—that of the *play proper.* In fact, it is so marked off and designated here rather by way of suggesting that, under educational guidance, there *should be* such a phase, than as claiming that, under present conditions, it actually exists in all cases.

The word "pageant" is here used, not in its common acceptance of

a huge spectacle, but as a technical term in dramatic structure, meaning *a series of episodes having a common theme, but no plot connection bringing the whole together into one dramatic unit.* Each episode is in itself a simple unit, having the essential elements of dramatic effect. Now, a group of boys or girls ranging from fourteen to eighteen years of age (approximately the high-school period) whose dramatic instinct has been allowed free expression and has developed normally through the story-playing and episodic periods, are naturally ready for a more sustained effort. At this time too they begin to feel the need of a more tangible motive for "dramatics" than the pure joy of self-expression, which sufficed in childhood. They do not wish to waste the sweetness of their creation "on the desert air"—or even on one another. In short, they crave an audience. This is fully as normal at this age as it was, at five, to be utterly oblivious of the presence or absence of an audience. When the dramatic instinct has reached this stage of development, the individual begins to sense the fact that dramatic expression is essentially a social activity, that playing a story is, after all, simply telling the story in action. But one tells a story *to* someone. Moreover, the critical interest in the *manner* of the telling is sufficiently strong now to stimulate a desire to "try it out on" an audience. How can the players know whether or not their telling makes the story clear and interesting unless they test it by the reactions of others, outside the group?

If they are not hastened (one might say, rudely jostled) on into the next period by misunderstanding adults, their first desire for an audience can be satisfied by very little of pomp and circumstance. The theater may be almost any place: the attic (as in the classic rehearsal scene in "Little Women"); a barn; a tent; two adjoining rooms separated by an archway. There is great excitement on the occasion of the first real audience (as most of us can remember), especially if they have paid a nickel for admission.

When the group begins to plan a formal entertainment, it is soon recognized that any one of the little "plays," or episodes, they have been working over will not be of sufficient length to give the public a fair equivalent for the entrance fee. Several solutions offer themselves. They may present a frank vaudeville show, having no relation whatsoever between the different "Acts." They may, in a daring moment, send for a publisher's catalogue and select a play, which is as likely as not wholly unsuited to their years. Or someone may say, "We've had two or three plays about the pioneers; let's put them all together and make a *real* play!" The young people themselves will probably not

use the term "pageant" in this connection. But when their "play" is ready, it is doubtless not a play at all, in the correct sense of the term, but a pageant; that is, a series of episodes connected by a common theme but having no plot connection.

In cases of more ambitious effort, where the group desires to raise a considerable amount of money for a worthy cause, the end in view will often determine the theme of the pageant. A troop of Boy Scouts, for example, wished to raise funds for a Scout Camp. One or two of the older boys (possibly seventeen years old) constructed a dramatic entertainment which they called "A Day in Camp," and which consisted of a series of demonstrations (some of them hardly deserving the name "episode," to be sure) showing the regular daily activities of the boys in the camp, with one or two more dramatic incidents.

This sort of thing appears to be perfectly normal at this period, while the presenting of the formal play with a highly complicated plot is probably not an absolutely normal manifestation of the instinct until the next period.

Formal Play Period

All that need be said here with reference to this period is that it is the natural culmination of a long process of development, and is probably not reached in the great majority of cases before the age of seventeen or eighteen.

One important point to be noted is that, whereas in all the preceding periods, the dramatic material has been largely the product of *group creation,* now the young people naturally look outside the group for their material. They want "real plays," often meaning by this plays which have been a success on the commercial stage. They have acquired sufficient appreciation of dramatic effect to realize that the writing of successful plays is an art requiring, as a rule, training and practice besides more or less of native ability. It does not generally occur to them that one of their own group could produce such a work of art; consequently they look elsewhere for their vehicles. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that exceptions to this statement may be found. There are, for instance, cases where the type of work described under the Pageant Period is continued somewhat beyond the normal age. One cannot assume that because a high-school senior tells one he has written a play he really has written one. The "play" may be found, on examination, to be merely a series of episodes having a common theme, but possessing so slight a plot to serve as connection between them that the whole should properly be defined as a pageant.

CHAPTER IV

ADAPTATION OF MATERIAL

Beginners, Primary, and Junior Departments

In the light of the above outline of the normal development of dramatic instinct, let us consider the types of material suited to the different departments of the Church School. This term is here used in the broadest possible sense, meaning: the church in its work of teaching. It is convenient in such a study to use the classification of a well-known organization for reference. But it will be understood throughout that when "the Junior Department," for example, is mentioned, the reference applies to any group of children of ages corresponding to the average age of the children in a Junior Department, etc. Since the grading of the Church School is at present in a state of transition (many schools having not yet adopted the new grading), it will be necessary to set down at the beginning the system here followed. The age limits of the different groups are in general practice approximate only.

Department	*Ages (Inclusive)*
Beginners	4–6
Primary	7–8
Junior	9–11
Intermediate	12–14
Senior	15–17
Young People	18–23
Adult	24–

In the case of each group it will be necessary to consider dramatic material from the standpoint of both *form* and *subject matter.* The form should be determined by the stage of development of the dramatic instinct at the time in question, the subject matter by the general interests and understanding of the group. (The preceding outline of the development of the dramatic instinct should be continually used for reference.)

Beginners Department

Form.—The material should consist of very simple incidents, occupying only a few moments of time, and not requiring prolonged

concentration on one situation; in fact, incidents so simple as not to merit the name "story," properly speaking. The incidents should demonstrate regular, uninterrupted activities, as a rule, rather than dramatic climaxes. Even where a story is involved (as when, for example, the younger children are allowed to join in the play of an older group), the smallest players should be given parts which will interest them as individuals, for the sake of the impersonation itself, rather than because of their relation to the plot.

Subject Matter.—The incidents, or activities, chosen for "playing" should deal with relationships well within the range of the child's comprehension. This is a simple thing to say, but it is not always so easy to determine whether or not a particular subject is within that range. All the knowledge which the teacher can acquire of child nature, whether through study in accredited schools or universities, through reading of authoritative books on the subject, or through personal observation, will be useful. In fact, it is not too much to say that one can hardly be expected to do thoroughly sound dramatic work as a phase of religious education without some background of knowledge of the general field of education.

It is to be remembered, in the first place, that the child of kindergarten age finds it just as natural to impersonate an animal, or even a flower, bush, or tree, as to play the part of a human being. Therefore, lessons may often be taught by analogy from the lower orders of creation. Manners, for instance, may sometimes be learned from observing the ways of a dog. Let each member of the group impersonate an Airedale (or any other dog of courteous breed) asking for its dinner, receiving it, and saying "Thank you." If it be remarked that this incident does not occur in the Bible, the answer is that it may be made illustrative of certain truths therein set forth.

Obedience to parents may be inculcated through the impersonation of little birds and kittens. A charmingly domestic scene before a hearth-fire in the romantic San Juan Islands remains indelibly pictured in the writer's mind. An unusually graceful cat (not very old itself) sat upon the hearth-rug and washed itself, apparently with more than usual religiosity; immediately behind it sat a still smaller individual of almost the same lovely pattern of gray and white. The kitten would observe its mother for an instant, then vigorously attack that part of its small anatomy which corresponded to the member at that moment receiving treatment from the parent. As soon as mother transferred her attention from a hind paw to the side of her face, the kitten followed suit. It might be difficult to find such perfect imitation among

humans. Numbers of similar incidents will occur to the teacher, and, in fact, if the idea presented is really intelligible to the children, they will sometimes contribute illustrations themselves. If so, all the better!

Many of the manners and customs of Bible times can be made interesting and vivid to the children through simple bits of impersonation. If the ways of the Hebrew shepherd are explained to them, for instance, they will delight in playing that they are sheep and lambs coming into the fold at night, and being counted, examined, and comforted by the shepherd. And is not this simple play building a background for sympathetic appreciation, later on, of the "Shepherd Psalm" and the conception of Jesus as "The Good Shepherd"?

We must be careful not to confuse the normal values of any given impersonation, to the Beginner, with the value which his Junior brother or sister finds in the same "play." It is true, for instance, that the little children will gladly play that they are reapers—or even sheaves of wheat—in connection with the story of Ruth. But their interest is in the impersonation for its own sake, not for the story; and it surely is not safe to assume that because a child has made believe to be a reaper for a few minutes he has necessarily learned a moral or religious lesson. Nor must the teacher leap to the conclusion that any story or incident which deals with children is invariably appropriate for juvenile players. It would be a matter of questionable wisdom, to say the least, to use the story of Elisha and the bears, even though the incident involves both children and animals. And even Balaam's remarkable ass would be of doubtful value to Beginners.

It is to be feared that children are sometimes exploited, in the name of "educational dramatics," for the amusement and pleasure of grown-ups. What could be more charming than to behold a lovely curly-headed five-year-old, like a Reynolds angel, in the devotional attitude of the Infant Samuel? The teacher, hearing in advance the delighted "Oh's" and "Ah's" of the mothers, aunts, and big sisters, is tempted to *use* the child in creating an ephemeral work of art for the gratification of her audience. If she understands the true function of the dramatic instinct, she will first ask herself just what is to be the particular meaning and value of the "play" to the child himself.

It happens that this story involves another problem: the representation of the Voice of God. There are teachers who appear to find this no problem at all. There are others who justify such representation, in children's play, on the ground that the little child's conception of Deity is necessarily anthropomorphic, and that, to their minds, there is nothing strange about the idea of hearing the Divine Voice with the outward

ear. There are still others (among them the present writer) who believe that this should never be done. Perhaps the reasons are not altogether communicable to one who does not feel them. Without dogmatizing on the matter, a warning may be given that before using a story which necessitates such representation, the individual teacher, or director, should give earnest thought to the problem; and unless she can arrive at a genuine conviction that she can so handle the situation as not to risk any blunting of the child's sense of reverence, she would probably be wiser to choose another incident. It is, of course, possible to dramatize certain scenes which involve a divine command without actually having the words spoken by an outward voice representing Deity. Samuel may "hear" the Voice in his own heart, and answer to it. But this treatment of the subject is naturally suited to older players —not to Beginners.

There are, as has been suggested, Bible stories which it is possible to play with a mixed group of Juniors and younger children. It will always be true, however, that the interest, the meaning, the value, to the child of five or six, will be different from that which the ten- or eleven-year old finds in it. An illustration may make this clearer. A certain group of children, mostly of Junior age, were playing, under guidance, the story of Moses in the Bulrushes, a tale which apparently has some appeal for every age. After playing it quite informally several times they had been led on to the dignity of a prompt-book, and the older children had memorized their lines to some extent. The five-year old sister of one of them—an unusually bright and beautiful child—was allowed to play the part of one of the maids of the Princess, Pharaoh's Daughter. It was difficult to keep her attention long enough at a time to cover the arrangement of the procession at its start from Pharaoh's palace, its progress, the grouping and action at the river-bank, and the return. Most of this was beyond her normal range of interest, and, short as it was, too long an interval of concentration. But she had been chosen as the one to lift the baby from the basket and show it to the Princess, having one short line to speak. At this point, when her wandering attention was recalled, she invariably and suddenly entered into the dramatic situation so completely that it was startling. She would blithely cast off all concern for the dignified words set down in the book and patiently taught her, and with a smile of angelic tenderness and radiance, gazing upon the life-size doll who filled the title rôle, exclaim, "Oh, look at the pretty baby!"

This was a beautifully normal manifestation of the dramatic instinct, and very suggestive. The story as a whole was doubtless beyond her

appreciation. But this one idea—the finding of a baby in a basket among the reeds in the river—was comprehensible, surprising, and pleasing to her. And even though she could not grasp the wonderful dramatic contrasts of the ancient story, or its far-reaching significance, the simple detail which was real to her would linger in her mind as background for a fresh interest in the story later on.

Sometimes the everyday Christian virtues may be illustrated by dramatizing simple incidents from life, related possibly by the children themselves, or by the director. To teach a Beginner the Bible text: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," would be of doubtful value; but let that same Beginner impersonate a child helping an old lady or a blind person over a street crossing, and the teacher can be fairly sure that a definite, intelligible impress has been made upon the little mind.

Questions of time, place, and method will be dealt with in Part Three.

Primary Department

Form.—There should be no great difference in form between the dramatic expression of the Primary children and that of the Beginners, except that their developing power of attention will allow concentration upon one incident for a slightly longer period, and, in the second year, they begin to appreciate very simple plot elements. The normal child of eight has, for example, a distinct sense of humor. It is naturally limited in scope, and at times crude, but it brings with it the capacity to understand and enjoy certain types of dramatic situations. The eight-year old can appreciate the fun, and much of the wisdom, in certain of the Fables of Æsop; and it is still perfectly natural to him to impersonate animals.

Second-year Primary children (boys particularly) will delight to play the incident of the young David slaying the lion that threatened his flock. (After the rôles of David and the lion have been assigned, the rest of the class will gladly be sheep and lambs.) The playing of this episode, provided the *telling* of the story has been wisely handled in the first place, will implant in the minds of the children the idea that the boy David was brave because he trusted in God.

The Primary teacher should beware of the easy solution of the problem of finding dramatic material in the Bible that consists in using a fragment of one of the favorite stories that is too long or too complicated to be played by Primary children as a whole. This solution may be safe in certain cases, but in others there is danger that it will lead to serious misunderstanding. Let us suppose, for example, that

the teacher wants to play a Bible story with a second-year Primary class. Instead of taking the time to find something really suitable, she settles on the story of Joseph, partly because she is already familiar with it, partly because it is a story every child should know. She realizes, however, that her class is too young to play the whole story, so, after telling the story briefly, she suggests that they *play* the incident of Joseph's being thrown into the pit by his jealous brothers, and then sold to the passing caravan. True, the children may enter into this with intelligence and considerable enjoyment. But consider that stories which have been played leave a much deeper impression on the mind than stories which have been merely heard. Is there not a very real danger that the final psychological effect of the whole experience will be a lingering sense of *pity* for Joseph as a helpless victim (the condition in which he was last seen in the *play*), and a feeling that jealousy and hate had finally triumphed, since when the *play* stopped, the brothers appeared the victors? The individual teacher reading these lines may be convinced that she could so handle the play as to avoid this danger, but it can hardly be denied that the danger exists. Would it not be wiser, then, to leave the *playing* of this story until the children are old enough to play the story through? This does not mean that every incident of the biblical narrative need be represented, of course, but simply that if the story is to be played at all, it should be played through to the real climax and the real dénouement. It should leave indelibly impressed upon the child's mind the picture of Joseph rewarded for faithfulness by great responsibilities, and victor, *not* over his brothers, but over his own spirit. It should leave a picture of the brothers as being purged, through suffering, and through Joseph's amazing forgiveness, from the spirit of jealous hate. Now, one does not expect the eight-year-old child to concentrate on one story long enough to play this marvelous drama through, and, indeed, some of it is doubtless beyond his range. The story may be told him, in a version adapted to his understanding, but surely it is better to leave the playing of it until his dramatic instinct has normally developed into the *story-playing* period.

This illustration has been given this much space because it is typical of a general distinction which the teacher should keep clearly in mind: the fact that a story may be appropriate for *telling* to a certain group does not *prove* that it is suitable for *playing* by the same group. The choice of material for playing involves greater responsibility than the selection of a story merely to be told, because the playing, in addition to the hearing of it, inevitably leaves a deeper impression on the mind than the hearing alone, as does also the seeing of it played by others.

After a production of "Joseph and His Brethren," played by a cast of men, entirely in the words of the Bible, the director was informed that a little girl of about eight years old had come home so excited that nothing would induce her to go to bed until she had told the family all about it, "acting it all out," as they reported, apparently in some astonishment. It was the first time anything of this sort had ever been done in the church in question, and doubtless the child's family were mildly amazed at beholding her so thrilled over a Bible story. It may be surmised that she did not, as a rule, come home from Sunday school in just this exalted mood.

Subject Matter.—Beyond what already has been implied in dealing with the question of form (the two invariably overlap to some extent), it need only be added that the child's interests are expanding at this time, to take in more varied human relationships. Moreover, the imagination is now normally active and free to range on different planes of being. The Primary child, as a rule, finds it as natural to be a fairy, an elf, a troll, a gnome, an enchanted Prince turned into a Beast, or to impersonate an angel, as to be a human.

The idea of the Father's care for his world may be illustrated by many simple nature plays. The children will delight to be snowflakes dancing down upon the little seeds under the soil—and then to be the flowers wakening from their long, warm sleep when spring comes and the showers fall upon them and the zephyrs blow above them. The first-year Primary children, at least, will be seeds, snowflakes, flowers, zephyrs, or raindrops with almost equal joy.

The Primary Department is surely none too early to begin laying the foundations for Missionary education by making the child familiar with the dress, manners, and customs, etc., of the children of other races, and of needy communities in his own land. Such familiarity paves the way for sympathetic understanding later on. Among the various methods of accomplishing this end, such as the use of pictures, dolls, clay modeling, etc., impersonation has possibly the most value, especially if the children can put on the clothes worn by the various World brothers whose parts they play. Good suggestions for simple bits of impersonation will be found in *Missionary Program Material,* by Anita B. Ferris (published by the Missionary Education Movement). The teacher can find much material for this purpose in various magazines, both missionary and secular. Of the former, *World Neighbors* will prove valuable; of the latter, *Asia,* and *The National Geographic Magazine.*

The teaching of manners and customs of Bible times can be carried further in this department by means of dramatic expression.

Junior Department

Form.—The Junior Department is preeminently the period of the "story-play." The distinction between this and the preceding (or "spontaneous") period should be quite clear in the director's mind. (See section, "Development of the Dramatic Instinct," pages 29-40.)

In the first year the stories should still be comparatively simple and short. Their length and complexity may be gradually increased. In the last year of the Junior Department, or even somewhat earlier than this, the children may be led naturally into the beginning of the Episodic period, but the way of doing this should be taken up in Part Three rather than here.

Subject Matter.—It should be understood, in all this matter of grading, that one period will often overlap another; that, for example, a child whose dramatic instinct is sufficiently developed to make even formal episodic work of occasional value, may, at other times, be willing to continue a type of simple play quite similar to that which is typical of the Primary child. But if his dramatic instinct is to continue its normal development, he should not be allowed to spend too much time in mere impersonation, or "static" play. He should be given the objective of a story—a plot. In the case of imaginative children with a good cultural background, the story will often be furnished, or invented, by the children themselves, but in many cases, the material must be given to them, with the suggestion of playing it, or the inhibitions of early adolescence will cast their shadows before them and check the instinct in the very crisis of its growth. The unobtrusive aid of a parent, a teacher, or a wise adult friend, who has a good story ready to tell at the proper moment, with perhaps a few hints about the possibilities of playing it, may do much to keep the "shades of the prison-house" from closing so rapidly and so inexorably as otherwise they might.

The teacher of religion and ethics may now turn to the Bible as a direct source of dramatic material and find much that is ready for immediate use, as well as much that can be imaginatively developed from a mere suggestion in the text. Probably the most important guidepost for the seeker is the instinctive hero-worship of the Junior child. Hero-stories can be counted on at least to hold his interest, provided the heroism is of a sort he comprehends. Physical bravery will almost certainly appeal; but there are also some types of moral heroism that he can appreciate.

There are stories that might be played in several different ways corresponding to the ages of the players; bringing out the physical courage

of the hero for the Juniors; his romantic devotion to a cause, or to a loved one, in the face of danger, for the Intermediates or Seniors; and the triumph of faith over disappointment, a heroism of the spirit, for Young People or Adults.

Let us take one familiar illustration from history. Consider the appeal which the story and character of Robin Hood has for almost all the Seven Ages of man. It would be an interesting study to put the question: "Why do you admire Robin Hood?" to a boy of ten, a girl of sixteen, a young man of twenty, a man, or woman, of forty, and another of seventy. It will even be worth while to stop a moment and surmise what the different answers might be. Of one thing we may be sure: they would not be all the same. It is quite possible that no two would be alike. And surely no one in his senses would expect the ten-year-old to appreciate the social or political significance of the deeds of Robin Hood (which would probably be the chief interest for the man of forty), or even the great outlaw's unwavering devotion to Maid Marian (which to the adolescent girl might almost obscure the other sides of the picture). And yet it is to be feared that some teachers, in choosing biblical material for dramatization, do not think it necessary to select heroes with the qualities that will be intelligible and appealing to the players they have in mind.

When we turn to biblical illustrations of this point, it behooves us to hold our breath and move gently amid the warring factions. There is no desire to enter here on controversial ground. Our aim should be to clear our minds of prepossessions and traditional prejudices and regard the material placed before us in the light of common sense, asking ourselves just what idea or emotional impression *our* Juniors, *our* Intermediates, etc., will be likely to get from participation in a dramatic version of it.

In the early chapters of Genesis is a story which came to be a great favorite in the Mediæval Miracle Cycles because of the comic relief which it afforded from the solemn and ofttimes tragic episodes surrounding it. In fact, as time went on, it was played up so strongly in this light that an eminent student of the history of drama has stated that the brilliant development of English comedy began with the mediæval versions of the story of Noah and the Ark. The tale has by no means lost its fun-making qualities, in dramatic representation. It is, on the face of it, impossible that it should be anything but laughable when the animals ascending the gangplank to the Ark are impersonated by human beings. Could anyone try to be a giraffe or a kangaroo and *not* be funny? It is largely this absurdity, indeed, that makes the enjoyment, for the children, in

playing the story. Someone will ask: "What harm? Is innocent fun to be frowned upon?" Surely not, but let us think a little further. We have not yet touched the real problem.

In the first place, is Noah the *kind* of hero the Junior child can really understand? In what does his heroism consist, as the story stands? Not in physical bravery; he was preparing to save himself and his immediate family from a cataclysm of nature. It is, rather, the moral heroism which persists in a certain course of action because of a deep conviction, in spite of jeers and laughter. This kind of heroism the Junior can understand, to be sure—indeed, can often illustrate mentally from his own experience. But as the story is generally interpreted, are we certain that the Junior would recognize the real heroism involved? If Noah actually heard the voice of God speaking to him, giving him private inside information on what was about to happen to the world, why, then, should Noah *not* have courage to act as he was instructed to do by the Almighty? In short, would a ten-year-old boy playing the part of Noah be getting a "vicarious experience" of real heroism—of the steadfastness of faith in the face of ridicule—or of a self-righteous consciousness of special favor from on high which would presently enable him to say, "I told you so!" to all his friends and neighbors? It will be worth while, after one's righteous indignation at such a question has cooled a little, to ask it of oneself quite seriously and answer it as honestly as may be.

Then let us consider the danger that the misunderstandings which may result from a dramatic rendering of the story at an early age will interfere with an appreciation of the true significance of it in later years. This significance, of course, lies not in the fact of the Deluge itself, not even in the history of the Ark and its passengers, but in the ethical *interpretation* which the Hebrew seers gave to an event which must have shocked the entire ancient world, since the early records of various empires bear witness to it. Among the guesses which the ancient recorders made as to the cause and meaning of such a cataclysm, the Hebrews alone saw in it the just judgment of a God of righteousness upon a world of sinners; they alone saw in the rainbow the beautiful symbol of a divine promise that such a catastrophe should never again overwhelm the human race. Thus the legend of the Flood, common to many ancient peoples, became to the Hebrews one more path by which they climbed to the vision of a God of righteousness and mercy. The story in Genesis, then, is but the *record* of one step in the "progressive revelation of God in the hearts and lives of men." Now, when our Junior arrives at an age to understand all this, will that understanding be quickened or dulled, be

made more reverent, or less so, by the memories which linger in his mind of playing "Noah and the Ark"?

It can hardly be repeated too often that not all stories which may be *told* to the children should be *played,* and that when we select material for playing we are inevitably facing more serious dangers, in case of error, than when we choose a story merely to be told.

Let us consider one or two illustrations of moral heroism within the range of the Junior's comprehension. When the twelve spies sent out by the Israelites in the wilderness to survey the land of Caanan came to report to Moses and the assembled multitude, it will be remembered that only two, Joshua and Caleb, sounded a note of hope and encouragement. The other ten had been overwhelmed by the strength of the enemy and feared to take the responsibility of urging their people on to possible annihilation. The sort of courage which was required for Joshua and Caleb, in the face of a discouraging report from ten associates, to say, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it," is not incomprehensible to a Junior, by any means; and if his imagination be assisted by skillful directing, the "vicarious experience" of moral heroism which would accompany the playing of this story might be a significant factor in the building of his character. (Ref.: Numbers 13. 1-14. 38.)

Again, the division of the land between Abraham and Lot offers opportunity to develop admiration for one phase of the greatness of Abraham. If a little explanation is given about the difference between the rocky plateau and wilderness, on the one side, and luxurious plain and river-valley on the other, and the fact that Abraham's knowledge of his nephew's nature made him well aware which region Lot would choose, the Junior can perceive the moral heroism involved in the Patriarch's offering first choice to his kinsman. The teacher, to be sure, may privately wonder whether Abraham felt that the rocky hillsides of Judæa offered a more stimulating environment in which to breed a conquering race; but this, if true, does not lessen the heroism, and would not interest the Junior. The immediate prospect of hard and ceaseless toil for Abraham he *could* see.

Once more, it would be within a Junior's range to appreciate the heroism of the youthful Gideon, when alone at midnight he broke down the idolatrous altar of his father's household. (Ref.: Judges 6. 1-32.) This story, by the way, could well be linked with an episode of the triumph of Christianity over idolatry on the mission field.

Closely related to this is the fact that a character, to be understood and appreciated by a Junior, must be simple and clear-cut. Even

though there may be different tones in the picture of his life as a whole, he must be made to appear definitely in light or in shadow at the moment when he is presented in action. If we show a child of ten a highly varied picture full of delicately blended tones and colors, he will see distinctly, and remember, the high lights and the deep shadows; his vision, and memory, of the half-tones may be vague. When it is a matter of character, more subtle things than this may happen in the mind of a child. A personality seen once in a white light becomes altogether bright in the youthful memory, so that it would require a shock to introduce a conception of any part of that character as less than noble. There are many people far beyond Junior age of whom this is true, as regards the persons whom they meet in real life. In its positive aspect we call this trait loyalty. When the converse of it becomes apparent, however, in an adult, we do not find it quite so admirable. The man who can see no good in the person who has once been known to blunder is not one whom most of us would wish to intrust with large responsibilities. The fact is that both the positive and negative phases of this quality are indications of an immature mind. However highly developed the individual may be along certain lines, in respect of his evaluation of character he has remained in the ten-year-old stage of mentality. During adolescence his sense of moral values has failed to receive the cultivation it should have had or else has failed to respond. One of the prime duties of the teacher of youth is to cultivate and sharpen the moral sense, to aid the young person to form the habit of balanced judgment. But the Junior teacher should recognize that children of nine or ten years have not normally reached the vantage-point of experience from which they can make fine discriminations in matters of character. They are engaged in acquiring a set of standards, and all that can be expected of them is to place the characters presented to them on either the light or dark squares of their moral checkerboard.

This fact with regard to Junior psychology should warn us that it would be wiser to choose as heroes for story-playing characters in whom light and shade are not too subtly blended. Joseph affords an illustration of the type of character suited to the Junior's appreciation of moral values; and we need go no further back than Joseph's father to find an excellent illustration of the type to avoid. Jacob is a personality to attract the sophisticated and speculative young person of college age; the very subtlety of the blending of strength and weakness, loyalty and treachery, offers a fascinating study. The character might even conceivably tempt a dramatist. But it is surprisingly difficult to discover in the biblical narrative a single episode in which Jacob appears in the unequivocal

white light of heroism. And even if such an incident is found, there would be grave danger, if the children play it, that they will acquire a one-sided and misleading idea of Jacob, and that when this false image is shattered, as it must be sooner or later, the youth will suffer a reaction of suspicion and distrust which may affect seriously his attitude toward other, and greater, men and women of the Bible.

It is obvious that, because of the limitations of the child's understanding, we cannot guarantee him against all misconceptions; but it is practicable, at least, to choose our heroes from among the simpler types. There will not then be so great a danger of severe shock when the necessary readjustments of maturing moral judgment take place. The child who has learned to think of Abraham as a hero must sooner or later, to be sure, accept the fact that the Patriarch was only human, and, as such, fallible. But he will probably then be able to see that his mistakes were either the natural converse of his virtues or else the result of his historical environment.

The moral problems involved in the episodes we present to Juniors for playing must be simple, as well as the heroes. Consider an extreme illustration of the wrong sort of problem to choose. The story of Jael and Sisera, found in the book of Judges, offers dramatic material indeed, but so unsuited for children that it would seem unnecessary to mention the fact if it were not that material just as unsuitable is frequently given to children, it is to be feared, by teachers who wish to use the modern, dramatic method, but unfortunately do not realize that they are handling, in ignorance, a tremendous force which, like almost all great forces, can be destructive as well as beneficent. Lightning, unguided, wrecks buildings; controlled, it gives them light and power.

Let us now turn to the story of Isaac and the Wells. (Ref.: Genesis 26. 18-22.) This can be very simply dramatized by the children, and offers several elements that will appeal to them. The quarrels of the herdsmen, and the indignation of Isaac's men, when he commands them to retreat from the debated ground, can be considerably elaborated, and the triumphant dénouement made very effective. Here is a concrete stating of the moral principle of the soft answer which turns away wrath, in a form which the Juniors can understand.

The fate of the Gibeonites offers another moral problem within the range of the third-year Juniors, at least. (Ref.: Joshua 9. 1-27.) They can easily be led into a discussion as to whether the judgment meted to the Gibeonites was just or not; and if the story-play is skillfully handled, they will perceive a general principle here: that where cowardice leads to deception, the result is not just what the coward had foreseen; to be

clear-headed, one must be brave. This story incidentally involves a dramatic device dear to the hearts of all ages: the disguise. To play a part is well; to play that one is *playing* a part is sometimes even better.

Before leaving the Junior Department it should be recalled that here, as elsewhere, our threefold criterion puts religious content first. The fact that a story has dramatic values, plus the fact that it interests children, does not prove it necessarily appropriate for use in a program of religious education. Children of Junior age love to play the wonder-stories of all times. Hercules, Siegfried, Beowulf (if they know him!) are beloved—and also Samson. These all have their place and function, but there would be no stronger reason for including the Samson stories in the dramatic curriculum of a school of religion than for the inclusion of any of the others.

CHAPTER V

ADAPTATION OF MATERIAL

Intermediate Department

Form.—As its name implies, this department is a transition period in general. This is true also of the development of dramatic instinct. Under intelligent guidance, the child will pass naturally from the informal to the formal episodic period, at about this time. This means that while the informal dramatic work of the Junior Department may be continued to some extent, the wise teacher will suggest, after an episode has been played several times, that the pupils attempt to write it out. Once having tried this, they will probably prefer to do it, and the sense of form, both in lines and action, will develop rapidly.

The situations dealt with may be of somewhat longer duration, for two reasons: the power of sustained voluntary attention is growing stronger; and an appreciation of certain of the more subtle dramatic effects is developing—such as dramatic irony and suspense. The episodic form is still much better, however, than the complexities of a full-grown plot.

Subject Matter.—We have now a whole new range of interests to draw upon. There is a new appreciation of individuality, of personality, instead of the Junior's ready response to the hero as an embodiment of some abstract virtue. If the Junior loves David because he was brave enough to slay Goliath, the Intermediate loves him because he was both a good soldier and a faithful friend, or, because he could handle both the sling and the harp with equal skill. In other words, the boy or girl at the dawn of adolescence begins to perceive that humanity has been molded not simply in several different patterns, but in an infinite variety of patterns; and even to see that it is the minute differences of the balance with which the many human attributes have been combined in varied individuals that make human life so fascinating a study.

In our pleased recognition of this new interest we should not commit the error of supposing our Intermediates ready for the complicated problems of character and ethics that will interest them a half-dozen years hence. But we may well introduce them to certain personalities in which they will find a keener interest than they would have found as Juniors, and lead them to discover in old favorites qualities of soul they had not glimpsed before.

The character of David will serve us again as illustration. In fact, there is no age at which some new discovery may not be made about the Shepherd-King, the Sweet Singer of Israel. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that a comprehensive program of Bible dramatics for the whole Church School could be based on this one life as illustration. In the first Book of Samuel (Ref.: 1 Samuel 24. 1-22) we find the story of David's making his way by night to the camp of Saul, who was pursuing him with jealous and vindictive rage, and, standing over the sleeping king, refusing to take advantage of his helplessness.

Here we have a courage of a different sort from that which slew Goliath: the courage to put honor before immediate success; the courage to face hardship and danger for an indefinite time rather than do wrong; the courage to *wait*. It need not be pointed out that there are several qualities in this situation which will appeal strongly to the young boy or girl. (While it is true that this story might be played with Juniors, it has a very special value for Intermediates, and therefore it will probably be wiser to reserve it for this department.)

One of the incidents connected with the establishing of the kingdom will have special interest for Intermediates. We learn (Ref.: 1 Samuel 10. 17-24) that after Saul had been privately anointed king by Samuel, and the time had come to present him to the people, he was nowhere to be found. Careful search revealed the young man about to be acclaimed as sovereign—he who was "higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward"—hiding among the baggage. The Intermediates will be interested to consider the explanation for this—although it will not be so easy to get them to talk freely about it as it is to start discussion among Juniors. This episode has some possibilities for playing that might interest the older Juniors, but the essential appeal of it is in the peculiar combination of qualities in Saul's character, and this is typically an Intermediate, not a Junior, interest.

There are some episodes from the book of Acts appropriate to this period, although the greater part of this material will be found to have more value for Seniors and Young People. A scene in the prison at Philippi (Ref.: Acts 16. 16-40) can be worked out by the older Intermediates, under guidance, so as to be almost a one-act play giving the whole story of the imprisonment, its cause, and its result. And certainly Paul's character is brought out here in several different lights, any one of which would appeal to Intermediates. The *combination* of them will prove fairly irresistible.

The Intermediates are not yet ready for the profound study of moral paradoxes found in such character as Peter the apostle. Moreover,

such a study demands the dramatic structure of the play proper, to do it justice, and for this they are not, normally, prepared.

On the other hand, there is a kind of interest in character very different from the Junior's hero-worship, which may manifest itself at different periods in different individuals, but, since it is quite likely to appear at this time, should be mentioned here: that is, the interest in the villain. Where Faust is too subtle to appeal, Mephistopheles may prove attractive. While there may be various explanations for this in different cases, it is probably most often the apparent cleverness of the rascal that appeals to the young boy or girl. This raises new problems for the educator, but at the same time brings new opportunities. If we may venture to illustrate the former by a hypothetical case, suppose the story of Jacob's obtaining of the birthright offered to a group of boys ten years old and another group fourteen years old. It is likely that in the first case nobody would volunteer to play Jacob, unless special inducements were held out; in the second case, it is quite possible that at least one boy in the group would ask for the part. It is not intended to suggest that this particular story should be used for playing, for not even the Intermediates are ready yet for a comprehensive study of Jacob's life in its amazing composite of darkness and light; and it would not be wise to present this incident isolated from such a study. But the story serves to illustrate the *problem.* Now let us consider one which suggests the *opportunity.*

It may serve to bring out the difference of treatment for Junior and Intermediate work if we turn to one of the stories already considered. The story of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9. 1-27) would appeal to Intermediates as well as Juniors, but in a slightly different way. The Junior group will deal with it in mass formation, as it were. They will realize that there must be a spokesman on each side. Joshua will be the natural leader of the Israelites, and, of course, they know something about him —he was a hero! But they will not need to know much about the man who represents the Gibeonites. They will feel no curiosity about his past life, his motives, his character, the secret of his hold on his followers. To them, he simply represents the *group.* And, indeed, they will not penetrate very far into the underlying motives for Joshua's judgment.

A group of third-year Intermediates, on the other hand, even if they do not start the discussion themselves, will be easily interested in speculation about this leader. We are given nothing in the Bible narrative on which to base a character sketch, but such a plot could not have been carried through without a real *leader,* and this the young people will readily see. A few wise questions will help them to build up a fairly

definite picture. How did he happen to think of such a scheme? How could he persuade the men of Gibeon that it would be successful? Why was he appointed leader of the expedition? What did he imagine would happen to him if he were found out? What really gave him the courage to take the risk? Was it perhaps because he had long been jealous of a popular leader in Gibeon, and coveted his place? What did he imagine would be his position in Gibeon if he succeeded? Do you suppose that when he saw Joshua face to face he knew he had met his match? Why? —etc., etc. (As Cyrano would put it, these are a *few* of the things that might be said.)

Now, the villain thus created may turn out, in the eyes of some members of the group at least, to be more fascinating than the hero. Someone may even ask to be assigned the part in the little "play" that is evolving. There is no reason for alarm at this; in fact, if it happens, as very likely it will, to be a lad somewhat given to slyness, the teacher should be pleased. Let the boy have the part, by all means; he does not yet know all the "vicarious experiences" in store for him before he gets through with it! The planning and discussion goes on, after parts have been chosen or assigned, and when the climax has been worked out, the wise director will turn the attention and imagination of the players to the *future* of the individuals in the story.

How does the leader of the Gibeonites feel on the way home? How do his fellow travelers act? Who do they decide must tell the news when they arrive in the Council of the Elders (or whatever the proper name of the gathering was)? The leader? How does he enjoy looking forward to that occasion? How many times do you suppose he makes up his speech to the City Fathers, on the way back? (To the boy who has chosen the part: Better try it and see what you can make of it!) Will there be any possibility of concealing the fact that he is really responsible for the bondage of his people? Will some of the men declare it would have been better to fight and die than to be slaves? How will people look and act when he passes along the street? Will they ever forgive him? Will anyone ever trust his judgment again? Will it perhaps be hinted that he was a traitor at heart? No, that wasn't true, and he knows it; but some time, when he is very lonely and unhappy, he may ask himself what really made him try such a foolish scheme; and if he is honest with himself, he will realize that it was selfish ambition, jealousy, and envy that drove him on. (These points also can be brought out by questioning; the statement is used here for convenience merely.)

Lest it be thought that all this is mere moralizing, unrelated to the dramatic problem in hand, let it be remembered that the *only thing* which

can make this Gibeonite leader's part convincing, in the judgment scene, is the player's vicarious experience of his sudden revulsion of feeling, and this is largely the result of his clear and terrible prevision of the fate in store for him. To be sure, a director could give a part like this to a great actor, and know that every moment of it would be lived through at *some* time during the actor's work on the part. This is entirely aside from the question as to whether the successful professional actor really *feels* his part while on the stage. That we need not discuss; we are not dealing with professional actors, but with boys and girls in everyday life. It is quite possible that acting as a fine art may, in the case of some actors at least, be defined somewhat as Wordsworth defined poetry: "Emotion recollected in tranquillity." But the point for the director of amateurs to notice is that there is a *background* of genuine emotional experience before we have *convincing* playing, whether by professionals or amateurs. The experienced actor can create this background for himself; the young amateur player often cannot do it without assistance. And the type of assistance required calls for study, for skill, and, above all, for sympathy.

It has been necessary to make a seeming digression into Part Three (Methods of Directing) because it was desired to show how the Intermediate's interest in the villain may often be made fully as valuable for character development as the Junior's adoration for the hero. The fourteen-year-old boy who has been carefully and sympathetically led through the vicarious experience of this ambitious man who failed will surely have learned something about the relation of motives to achievement, something about what constitute the real values in human life as opposed to the spurious. He may not be able to tell you what he has learned, and the wise teacher will not ask. But if his work has been well done, he may have faith that it has not been futile.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the interests to which one may appeal at any period of life, and no attempt is made, in this short treatise, to give a comprehensive list. It is desired, rather, to indicate a few of the interests which are typical or distinctive of each period, in order that the teacher may have a guide-post here and there to point the way to material of value and appropriateness.

Senior Department

Form.—It will be recalled that the stage in the development of dramatic instinct designated the "Pageant period" corresponds to the average ages of "Senior" pupils. This means that to insure the continued normal development of the instinct, and its educational values, the teacher or director should lead the pupils to construct simple pageants for them-

selves. Let it be clearly understood that the word "pageant" is used here not in the sense in which it is so generally employed to-day, meaning almost anything that is not exactly a play. As used here, it does *not* mean a morality, nor a masque, nor a series of tableaux, nor a dramatized oratorio, nor a mere procession with banners and music. To avoid misunderstanding, let us repeat here the definition given: *A series of episodes having a common theme, but no plot connection bringing the whole together into one dramatic unit.* Let us remember also that an "episode," properly speaking, is in itself a dramatic unit, having at least some of the chief elements of dramatic effect.

The first attempt at pageant construction may well be based on several episodes already played by the pupils, possibly while still in the Junior Department. Or it may deal with entirely new material.

Subject Matter.—The form and the subject matter appropriate at this period show a peculiarly nice adjustment. The age of the pupils corresponds, generally speaking, to the first three years of high-school (where the junior high school does not enter into the scheme of public education). The entrance upon high-school life is often, in the case of pupils with intellectual curiosity, a period of marvelously rapid and thrilling enlargement of the horizon and multiplication of interests. Even the least earnest are, by a sort of contagion, occasionally lifted out of their mental sluggishness into a moment of wonder at the world that is "so full of a number of things." While all these varied responses might possibly be seen to have some bearing on the development of dramatic instinct, the director, after all, is not immediately concerned with one pupil's passion for mathematics, or another's delight in the scientific laboratory. Among the subjects closely related to appreciation of drama and dramatic expression are naturally art, music, physical and vocal culture, the applied arts (design, decoration, etc.), and poetry, for its rhythm and lyric beauty. But the subjects of most importance to the teacher who is attempting to relate the dramatic instinct to religious education are undoubtedly history and literature (including drama). Let us see what new interests we find developing in these fields.

If the Intermediate is fascinated by the multifarious combinations of qualities that result in character—in *individualities*—the Senior is curious to discover the underlying principle that unifies these qualities and welds them together into the *person.* They begin to perceive the importance of habits of mind, of attitudes toward life, of purpose. Where the Junior or Intermediate appreciates the heroism in a single act, the Senior will recognize the heroism involved in a long-maintained and consistent *course* of action. But whereas the single deed of heroism may occupy

only a few moments of time, and therefore is perfectly adapted to the episodic form, the heroic *attitude* may require a long series of deeds, words, and thoughts to represent. It does not always require a *plot* to do this; in fact, for the Senior, the complications of a finely wrought dramatic structure might only serve to cloud the issue. What is needed is a series of episodes, not necessarily related as to *story,* but each bringing out, in a different light from the others, the point of compass toward which the soul of the hero aims, or, if you like, his spiritual rudder. Therefore the *pageant,* as here defined, is seen to be the type of dramatic structure best suited to the subject matter which appeals to this age. For character-study of this sort the biographical pageant is naturally best suited; and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that, toward the close of this period this form may develop into the pageant-play. It is probable, however, that this development is more truly characteristic of the next period, and it will therefore be taken up more fully in that connection.

Before turning to the Bible again, it may be as well to confess frankly that the majority of our illustrations deal with male characters; the teacher of girls must face the fact that it is a more difficult matter to find ready-made dramatic material for girls in the Bible than to find it for boys or young men. The women who made themselves distinguished in Old-Testament times did so, in many cases, by attributes we do not care to hold up for emulation. Jezebel, Athaliah, Delilah, Jael—strong women, all of them, but surely not appropriate for dramatic representation by high-school girls. There is grave doubt as to the suitability of Deborah and Miriam, valiant singers of war-songs that roused the fiercer emotions of the Israelites, and can still rouse ours to-day! Others of the outstanding figures play too passive a part in the story to be made heroines, except by the creative touch of the dramatist. It is doubtless due to this dearth of ready-made heroines that the dramatizers have so frequently turned to Esther, to Ruth, and to Jephthah's Daughter, whose stories offer dramatic material indeed, although, as was suggested in Part One, not particularly suited to our purposes in general. (A special use of such stories will be mentioned under the Adult Department.)

A few portraits there are in the biblical gallery for which the teacher of girls should give thanks, even though they are no more than sketches. Miriam, the young girl, as she appears in the story of the infancy of Moses, is an altogether different picture from the Miriam of the Exodus and of the Wandering. The captive maid who sent Naaman the Syrian to Elisha offers a wonderful opportunity for character-study (probably better suited to Intermediates than to Juniors).

When we turn to the New Testament we find a new value placed upon the individuality of women, and consequently more material fitted to our needs. Besides the well-known women of the Gospels, the story of Lydia of Philippi, for instance, has possibilities. It has been used for story-playing with Juniors and, as a formal play, with college students and even older players. It could surely be utilized in the Intermediate and Senior Departments.

In this difficulty there is one great comfort: that, where girls are playing in a group by themselves at least, there is no objection to their impersonating men, and the fundamental truths of the moral law will reach their understanding through the medium of a male character often just as well as through a woman's.

A little study will reveal numbers of Bible characters whose stories can be set forth in a series of episodes which, taken together, will build up a definite idea of the underlying principle, the motive power of their lives. The story of how Saul came to be the first King of Israel naturally falls into pageant form. There might be, for instance, five episodes, as follows:

I. The People's Request for a King. 1 Samuel 8. 1-22.
II. The Anointing of Saul. 1 Samuel 10. 1-16.
III. The Popular Acclamation. 1 Samuel 10. 17-24.
IV. The Rescue of Jabesh-Gilead. 1 Samuel 11. 1-11.
V. The Coronation of Saul. 1 Samuel 11. 12-15.

One of these incidents has already been suggested for Intermediate work; a group that has played that episode will be all the better prepared to develop such a pageant. And this succession of episodes will show that, while in the face of impending popular triumph and acclaim, Saul fled, when the test of leadership came in stern reality, he rose to meet it with promptness, courage, determination, and consciousness of power. We may well pause to note also the dramatic effectiveness which exists in the actual progress of events. There is an element of suspense running through the whole story from the first episode to the last. The interest rises from the beginning to the coronation itself, and this could be made a spectacular finale. In fact, the story as a whole has so much of real dramatic quality that it suggests the possibility of a pageant-play, and, if used in the next period, it might be so treated.

The story of Joshua lends itself to pageant treatment. A class in dramatics, at a Summer School of Religious Education, at Evanston, in 1922, planned and wrote a pageant on the life of Joshua. It was called

"The Honored Scout," and, in its final form, consisted of the following episodes:

I. The Report of the Spies. Numbers 13 and 14.
(Joshua, the Scout.)
II. Accepting the New Leader. Joshua 1.
(Joshua, the Leader.)
III. Joshua Punishing the Gibeonites. Joshua 9.
(Joshua, the Judge.)
IV. The Cities of Refuge. Joshua 20.
(Joshua, the Governor.)

The story of Gideon has elements which, arranged in pageant form, should appeal to Seniors. His humility when first called to leadership, his conviction that success depended on faithfulness to Jehovah, his withering scorn for the selfish lack of loyalty among the tribes, his meek and tactful answer to the men of Ephraim, and his refusal to take the kingship when it was offered to him—here is a character worthy of study. Moreover, it illustrates another new interest which appears toward the close of this period; that is, the idea of character *development*. The Junior, and even the Intermediate, generally speaking, regards character as a static thing; at some time during the Senior period, if the youth's mind is developing normally, he begins to realize that character is a dynamic thing—a growth, or a deterioration. In their English classes, during this period, the young people are studying, often with intense interest, such books as *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Silas Marner*. Now, while some of the episodes in Gideon's life would doubtless appeal to Juniors for story-play, if the material were to be used as a pageant by Seniors, the theme should be Gideon's development into a hero. The series of episodes chosen should bring out the fact that Gideon's loyalty to his highest ideals, in spite of fear, brought him courage, and how courageous deeds brought ever greater power and confidence. (Ref.: Judges 6. 11-8. 32.)

More than one pageant might well be constructed about the life of David; one of special appropriateness at this time, because of this newly acquired interest in the development of character, would be on David's early life and the way in which he was prepared for the kingship. The striking tests of character, the dramatic contrasts brought by the vicissitudes of life, that gradually prepared the shepherd lad and harpist to be the greatest king of Israel; the years of exile, which are of the very essence of romance; the exquisite story of the friendship of

Jonathan—at all this we marvel afresh each time we return to it. And there is much here that might be made of special value to the Senior pupils, if dramatized under the guidance of a skillful teacher.

A college class in Dramatics in Religious Education was asked to prepare a pageant on a biblical theme suited to Senior pupils. The result was entitled: "The Witness of Peter and John," and consisted of four episodes:

I. The healing of the lame man, the address of Peter, and the arrest of Peter and John. (Acts 3. 1-4. 3.)
II. The hearing before the Council the following morning. (Acts 4. 4-22.)
III. The deliberations of the Council after the second arrest of Peter and John, when they were condemned to be flogged. (Acts 5. 12-42.)
IV. The return of Peter to the house of Mary, mother of Mark, on his release from his third imprisonment. (Acts 12. 1-17.)

The first two episodes of this series have been used successfully for story-play with Juniors, but the pageant, as outlined, is undoubtedly especially appropriate for the Senior Department.

A volume of plays and pageants might be written on the life of Paul. The material will be found mostly in the book of Acts, but the Epistles contribute much as a basis for the interpretation of his character.

There is still another characteristic of this period which should be noted: the Senior is fond of subtle moral problems, and often discusses them with an amazing cleverness of sophistry. Adults, even teachers, sometimes lose patience with this tendency to casuistry, feeling that the young people are insincere. The fact probably is that in many cases this habit is due to an awakening desire to see both sides of a matter; to get the *other* point of view, as well as that generally accepted. This desire, it is true, occasionally leads to something that appears like sheer perversity. Every high-school teacher of literature knows the type of student who sees a villain in the hero and finds an unrecognized saint in the veriest rogue. Of one thing we may be sure: we cannot now count upon the simple, trusting acceptance of conventional standards which is characteristic of the Junior. While this development brings its own dangers, it also enlarges our opportunities for exerting influence through the guiding of discussion.

CHAPTER VI

ADAPTATION OF MATERIAL

Young People's Department

Form.—The *play proper* is now a perfectly suitable vehicle of expression. The students are now able to appreciate the finer dramatic effects. Therefore they should be given the opportunity to work on well-constructed plays. It is very important, however, that the material given them should be not only appropriate in its subject matter, but also dramatically sound. For reasons that are concerned with character as much as with æsthetics, they should not be asked to work on something which pretends to be a play but is really nothing but a series of conversations or of situations in which the characters are obviously handled like chessmen by the author for some purpose of his own. It is much better that the young people should give no plays at all than that they should give bad plays.

Here we face a difficulty: there is as yet no great number of really good plays on biblical themes suited to the ends of Religious Education. On the one hand, we find plays written by persons who have the religious viewpoint indeed, but are quite innocent of dramatic technique; on the other, those written by playwrights of some technical skill, but without a sincere appreciation of the religious content of their material, or any knowledge of modern historical Bible study, and often apparently unaware of the existence of a science of Religious Education. If we keep our threefold criterion of dramatic, religious, and educational values clearly in mind, it may not be an easy thing to find a biblical play appropriate to the particular group of young people we have in mind. There are, however, some excellent Bible plays now in print; and it is hoped that the present series may help to solve the problem in many cases.

Because of the lack of sufficient good material, and other reasons, it is advisable that the group-creation of pageants be continued to some extent in the Young People's Department; and also that, wherever special interest is shown, certain students should be encouraged to attempt the writing of *pageant-plays*. The pageant-play, unlike the pageant proper, has a plot which ties the whole together, and it also has dramatic effects which are seen in the piece *as a whole*, as well as those confined to one

scene or episode (such as suspense, gradual rise of interest, climax). This form differs from the play proper in having a looser structure, and a greater freedom as to the unities. That is, it may range over a larger territory and a longer time than is generally expected of a play, and may introduce elements, or even whole scenes, for objects aside from the actual advancement of the plot. For example, in a pageant-play dealing with the life of Abraham, it would be permissible to introduce a scene demonstrating the everyday domestic activities in the Patriarch's dwelling in order to establish the historical atmosphere. In a play proper it would be necessary to make such a scene an essential step in the unfolding of the plot; or, rather, it would be necessary to establish the historical atmosphere *at the same time* that one advanced the plot.

It is perhaps obvious that a pageant-play would not be created by a group, but by one person, or at the most two in collaboration. However, the pageant-play does not demand so great a mastery of technique as the play proper, and is therefore possible of accomplishment by less developed writers. This is not to say that the writer of a pageant-play will not find useful all the technique he can acquire; only that it can be done without the fineness of workmanship necessary to a successful play.

Another distinction is that the pageant-play generally contains some masses of people. While such elements will sometimes be found in the spectacular elements, such as processions, or scenes involving great play proper, they are more characteristic of the pageant-play; and are viewed as essential to *pageantry* in the current usage of the word.

Subject Matter.—The widening of the range of interests that occurs normally during this period is in some cases so sudden as to suggest the figure of a mountain-climber coming out unexpectedly on a plateau or ledge from which he sees a horizon that appears to have been magically expanded. The last year of work in a good high school is stimulating, and for those who go on to college or university there is a rapid introduction to new worlds of knowledge and of thought, as well as a deepening appreciation of the import of facts already known. For those who begin their life-work at once on leaving high school, or even before they have finished the course, the awakening may be less rapid in many cases, and often the mental horizon never attains so broad a reach as might have been possible with the help of college training. In other cases, it is quite possible that the first actual experience of independent life and self-supporting activity in the business world may bring about a more rapid unfolding than the same young person would have had in academic halls and libraries. However it comes, the life in which there is no intellectual awakening at this time is sadly stultified indeed.

Considering this expansion of the horizon as normal, then, what are the new interests which particularly concern us? They may be taken all together as indicating a new interest in *social adjustments*. Up to this period, generally speaking, the problems of the individual in adjusting himself to life have absorbed whatever attention was devoted to ethical or religious matters. The young man or woman of college age begins to perceive the problems involved in racial, national, political, international, and industrial adjustments. The relations of groups, and also the interrelation of the individual and the group, begin in many different ways to arouse his curiosity—often his deep concern. (It is readily admitted that the debating societies and Current Events clubs of the modern high school, and the wise teaching of history and literature, may serve to hasten this development in a considerable number of individual cases, as home environment may do in others, but in such a study as this we must consider averages; and the fact that leaders in Religious Education have, in the new grading of the Church School, made a distinct break at eighteen years of age indicates that this is generally regarded as a turning-point for the majority.)

Let us consider a few illustrations of biblical material that would appeal especially to this new interest.

The story of the Exodus might now be handled so as to reveal its profound dramatic interest: the climax in the relations of two strong races, one of which had, unfortunately for its peace, mistaken the other in its infancy for a race of slaves. Here is truly great dramatic matter; but if presented to students before later adolescence, it becomes inevitably a mere tale of magic and of horror, of which the value for religious education is questionable, to say the least. (It cannot be too often reiterated that there are stories which may be told, or read, as being essential to a general understanding of the background of biblical history, which should not be given to children in the vastly more impressive form of dramatic representation.)

Such a theme as this involves necessarily the intimate study of certain individuals as leaders of the opposing groups, and this brings up the problem old as Cain, which is possibly just beginning to stir in the consciences of the young players. Is life simply a possession, to do with as one will, or is it a responsibility as well? Are they, indeed, their brothers' keepers? Why could not Moses remain among his flocks and herds on the peaceful slopes of Sinai? Was the haunting memory of his kinsmen's misery in Egypt indeed the voice of God calling upon him to fulfill his mission? If so, was it only the people in the Bible who were divinely called to serve and to lead? The Exodus is not suggested as an easy

theme to handle, but only as a very clear and definite illustration of the type under consideration.

The story of Elijah and his conflict with Baalism may now be dealt with as the climax in a long struggle between two religions (indeed, between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion) for mastery of the Hebrew race. On one side Jezebel and the four hundred priests of Baal; on the other the majestic figure of the prophet, with the shadowy seven thousand at his back: here is truly a dramatic situation, with the soul of a people in the balance. But, again, to make this more than a tale of magic, there is required an understanding and concern for *social* adjustments which we should not expect to find below the Young People's Department.

In the life of David alone it would be possible to find material for several plays and pageant-plays, most of which have some social significance. The story of the relations between Saul and David would be more appropriately handled in the form of a pageant-play. It would be almost impossible to treat this subject and leave out the friendship of Jonathan, which, as a subplot in a play proper, might endanger the balance of the structure; the story covers a considerable period of time; and it falls naturally into a number of short scenes, episodic in character, rather than into three or four long acts. In other words, the theme is of a too discursive nature to make easy handling in the form of a play proper; as a pageant-play, it is almost ready-made. And the study necessary to make clear the different political factions among the people, and the way in which Saul decreased and David increased, will bring out various interesting facts about the way in which kingdoms are made. Incidentally, the spectacular culmination suggested by the public anointing of David, after the death of Saul and Jonathan, is perfectly appropriate to a pageant-play. (Ref.: 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel 1 and 2. 1-4.)

On the other hand, the joining of North and South in the kingdom of David offers an intensive, sharply defined struggle, covering a comparatively short space of time, and dominated throughout by the figure of David. It is a fascinating problem, both from the standpoint of dramatic structure and from that of social adjustments. David began to build his empire on the principle, "In union is strength." The question was whether he would be able to make this principle prevail against the tribal jealousies and hostilities that had grown up through the years since the entrance to the Promised Land. For some time the issue hangs in the balance. David's character is tested again and again, and each time his marvelous tact is manifested. This distinctly calls for the *play proper*

as a dramatic form. And yet the material is so clearly "given" that a young person of college age with a fair gift in this line could quite easily construct the piece. (Ref.: 2 Samuel 3. 1-5. 5.)

Two rebellions which occurred during the reign of David illustrate the difference between the play and the pageant-play. The first to occur was that of Absalom. This story, taken as a whole, has the elements of passion, conflict, suspense, and logic of cause and effect. Therefore it should be handled in a *pageant-play* rather than a *pageant*. It requires more coherence and closeness of structure than can be attained in the work of a group of which the members write different scenes; therefore it should be written by one person, or two in collaboration. On the other hand, the material has hardly sufficient unity for a play proper. (This is not to say, of course, that an experienced dramatist could not write a play on this theme if he wished; but it would require more creative imagination and technical skill than one would expect to find in the Young People's Department as a rule.) The story naturally falls into a fairly long series of episodic units rather than into the typical play form. (Ref.: 2 Samuel 15. 1-18. 33.)

In contrast to this consider the story of Adonijah's Rebellion, which forced the aged monarch to proclaim his successor. Here we find a play almost ready-made. It arranges itself automatically in three acts; the whole action covers only a few days; the conflict is sharply defined, the suspense strong, the climax full of human interest, and the dénouement intensely dramatic. Moreover, besides offering a variety of character-studies, it involves the general problem of the fickleness of mobs. In fact, it might be made a play dealing with the theme of mob psychology: a subject certainly in line with the young person's newly awakening social interests. (Ref.: 1 Kings 1. 5-53.)

An interesting comparative character-study could be made by following this play with one dealing with the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon. The young people are now ready to consider such problems as heredity, the influence of environment and education, etc. They will be interested to note the contrast between the great king who spent his youth in the hard and heroic life of a lonely shepherd on the hills, and his grandson, born in a palace and reared in luxury; whose father's name has come down the centuries as a symbol of royal splendor; but who was not strong enough to keep intact the kingdom he had inherited. (The hero of the piece would naturally be Jeroboam, not the weakling.) This could be handled either as a pageant-play or as a play. The choice of form in such a case would depend chiefly on two factors: first, the author's principal objective. If the course of events is to be the

chief interest, if it is desired to give a moving picture of many of the incidents in the story, to trace the pattern of destiny with bold, quick strokes, the pageant-play would be the more suitable form; if an intimate and intensive character-study of a few persons is the object, the play would be the natural vehicle. The second factor is the type of *production* desired. If the author wishes to use a large number of players, a chorus, etc., and to build a spectacular production, he will naturally think in terms of the pageant-play; whereas if only a few players are available and it is intended to use very simple equipment, the play will be his choice. (Ref.: 1 Kings 11. 26-12. 24.)

The lives and teachings of the prophets contain much material peculiarly adapted to appeal to a youth of this age. The surprising closeness of the parallels which he will discover between certain conditions in the days of the prophets and those in our own will come with the thrill of a great revelation to an earnest young mind. The work of putting such themes into dramatic form will, to be sure, require more expert guidance than the dramatizing of the earlier stories of the kingdom; but the number in the present series entitled *Fearless Men* is a striking evidence of what may be accomplished under wise leadership. Much of this material would be best suited to the pageant-play form. On the other hand, there is a wealth of material to be found in the New Testament by the seeker with creative imagination, which demands the structure of the play proper, to do it justice. The half-dozen short plays published under the title, *Friends of Jesus,* in the present series, well illustrate this type of dramatic material and its treatment. The three-act play, *The Rich Young Man* (another number in the series) illustrates a longer, more elaborate treatment of the same type of theme.

The life of Paul offers material for several pageant-plays and plays. And even the Epistles contain suggestive themes.

Adult Department

Form.—All that was said with reference to dramatic form, under the Young People's Department, applies with equal or even greater force here; except that it may be more difficult to persuade a group of adults to attempt the writing of a *pageant,* and consequently there is even greater need for good *plays.* On the other hand, there is probably a better chance of discovering, in this department, someone who has a real talent for playwriting, of which possibly he is quite unaware. A tactful leader might succeed in persuading such a person to experiment, and aid very materially in developing a gift which would otherwise be wasted. While there is doubtless much exaggeration in the advertisements of correspond-

ence schools of photoplay-writing, which strive to convince the reader that a genius for dramatic construction is almost universal, it is probably true that numbers of people could develop sufficient facility to produce actable plays; and it is a serious question whether we shall ever have as much material as is called for by the present revival of religious drama unless some persons vitally interested in religion learn how to write plays.

Subject Matter.—Almost all material of special interest to Young People will also be of interest here, and many themes which were used in different departments can now be approached from a fresh viewpoint. To attempt to point out general distinctions between the interests of adult life and those of later adolescence is venturing on debatable ground. Any generalization can immediately be met with many exceptions on both sides of the line. If this is granted at the start, however, it may be suggestive for our purpose to note at least one interest which is, on the whole, typical of intellectual maturity; that is, the interest in the relation of the Past to the Present and the Future. This interest manifests itself in the pursuit of many highly specialized subjects of study, in the case of those who continue their academic training beyond the regular college course: for example, all sciences which deal with the evolution of the material universe (astronomy, geology, chemistry, etc.); of life (biology, etc.); of consciousness (psychology, etc.); and of society (political economy, ethnology, etymology, sociology, etc.). Among those who leave school early in life this interest may sometimes be later in developing, and often appears in a strangely limited manifestation, such as the passion for genealogies that sometimes crops out in middle life. But even where environment has not given it a chance for normal development, it is generally latent and ready to respond to a sufficient stimulus.

A mature mind, then, should be interested in the history of religion, and on this theme the Bible is the greatest source book that can be found. It offers a variety of subjects for dramatization which would appeal to adults with special force. It may be suspected that there are mature members of the church who know comparatively little about the history of religion (even that part of it which is recounted in the Bible) and will not be likely to turn to the textbooks of the seminaries in order to find out. A series of dramatizations, introduced or accompanied by a series of interpretative *short* talks by the pastor, would be the means of opening for many a new world of interest and a better understanding of the religious problems of the day. The following annotated list of subjects may prove suggestive; it is not intended to be in any sense comprehensive. It will

be noted that a few subjects are included here which have been mentioned as inappropriate for general use. If properly related to such a program as we are now considering, and carefully interpreted with the general theme of the series in mind, they might be safely used. Each group would have to solve for itself the problem as to whether the audience should in any case be limited to adults, or whether children should be "not invited."

Biblical Themes for Dramatic Treatment Dealing with Aspects of the History of Religion

Note:—The majority of these subjects are suggested for use with adults only—*not* for children.

1. Abraham and Isaac. (The triumph of Jehovah-worship over religions which demanded human sacrifice. This theme particularly demands careful interpretation and skillful handling. (See pages 18 and 19 in Part I.) Ref.: Genesis 22. 1-19.
2. The Golden Calf. (The conflict of a religion of righteousness with one of ceremony.) Ref.: Exodus 32. 1-35.
3. The sin of Achan. (The development of the idea of *taboo.*) Ref.: Joshua 7. 1-26.
4. Jephthah's Daughter. (Ref.: Judges 11. 29-40) or Jonathan at Michmash. (Ref.: 1 Samuel 14. 1-46.)
   (The superstition which held a vow, even a foolish one, more sacred than human life.)
5. Micah and his idols. (The conflict of a religion of the spirit with idolatry.) Ref.: Judges 17. 1-18. 31.
6. Saul's sacrifice and Samuel's prophecy of punishment. (The beginnings of ecclesiasticism.) Ref.: 1 Samuel 13. 1-14.
7. Saul and the Witch of Endor. (Sorcery and spiritualism.) Ref.: 1 Samuel 28. 3-25.
8. The bringing up of the Ark to Jerusalem. (The persistence of fetishism in a spiritual religion. *Note:*—Such a theme as this would necessitate the invention of a *plot,* which might be based on other biblical material of the same period. Also, this incident might be used in a pageant or pageant-play, for purely spectacular purposes.) Ref.: 2 Samuel 6. 1-19.
9. Elijah on Mount Carmel. (Propagation of religion by force.) Ref.: 1 Kings 17 and 18.
10. Hosea. (The emergence of a religion of kindness and forgiveness.) Ref.: The book of Hosea.
11. Sennacherib's Invasion. (Triumph of the monotheistic faith, just

struggling into life, against terrible odds and temptations.) Ref.: 2 Kings 18. 13-19. 37.

12. Ezra. (The relation of racial purity to the development of religion.) Ref.: Ezra 9. 1-10. 17.

13. Esther and Mordecai. (The religion of vengeance.) Ref.: the book of Esther. (*Note:*—See p. 20.)

14. Job. (Protest against the theory of good and evil as altogether a matter of reward and punishment. A religion of faith viewed as the "Will to Believe.") Ref.: The book of Job.

15. Paul and the silversmiths of Ephesus. (Ref.: Acts 19. 8-20. 1), or The Sorcerer of Paphos. (Ref.: Acts 13. 6-12.)
(The opposition of the trader in superstition to the teaching of a spiritual religion.)

16. Paul's Defense at Jerusalem. (Ref.: Acts 21. 27-23. 30), or Paul's Defense before Agrippa. (Ref.: Acts 23. 31-26. 32.)
(The dawning of the idea of Christianity as a universal religion. *Note:*—The choice between these two subjects will be determined partly by the number of players it is desired to use and the general nature of the production; the scene at Jerusalem requiring a crowd, and a more difficult setting than the other. However, it brings out the theme with more of dramatic force, probably, than the other; or, rather, it would probably result in a more straightforward, intensive treatment of the main theme than the other. The situation at Cæsarea almost necessitates one or more subplots which would require careful development.)

PART THREE

METHODS OF PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION

CHAPTER VII

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

If the production of a play may be regarded as providing it with a body suitable for the expression of the mood and meaning of the author, then the directing of the players may well be viewed as breathing into that body the breath of life. A good play beautifully produced but insincerely played inevitably fails to make a deep or lasting impression on an audience; while the same play produced with very little artistic effect, but played with sincerity and conviction, may make a profound appeal. The ideal is the beautiful body animated by a beautiful spirit, but for the purposes of religious drama, it is obvious that the spirit is of prime importance. Hence our first concern is the preparing of the *players* for participation in a religious drama.

Moreover, in the lower grades of the Church School there should be very little in the way of public production. The fundamental principles of educational dramatic method are the same, whether one is guiding children in an informal story-play, or directing a group of college students in a formal production. Therefore these principles will be outlined at the start, and later specific application made to the work of the different departments.

The essential significance of dramatic expression for religious and moral education does not consist solely, or even principally, in the subject matter; but in the act of impersonation itself, when guided according to educational principles. Therefore we must consider more closely the nature of this act.

Impersonation.—In order to realize the significance of impersonation as an educational method, we must study it in its natural, spontaneous form. This has been made difficult by certain general and persistent associations of ideas. First, there is the tendency to confuse this with the *art* of *acting.* This misapprehension seems almost impossible to dislodge from the minds of many persons, even some engaged in so-called "educational dramatics." They know, to be sure, that their child-players are not "actors," in the professional sense of that word; and yet in five minutes of conversation they will often betray their confusion of thought on the subject. Their terminology is full of echoes from the theater. This in itself would be of no significance did it not indicate a mistaken point of view. The fact is, such directors have never suc-

ceeded in breaking the association of ideas which automatically connects the thought of impersonation with the thought of exhibition, of production, of the Art of the Theater. Their habitual thought of impersonation is in terms of presentation to an audience. Now, while it is true that a director of any sort of *production* must think of it long and carefully in that light, it is equally true that until he can temporarily disassociate these two conceptions of impersonation, in his own thinking, he will be incapable of dealing intelligently with it as an educational force.

Impersonation as an art is character-portrayal, conscious, studied, controlled by a definite technique, and motivated by the desire to share an inner experience with others. This desire may be variously colored according to the dominating purpose or habitual attitude of mind of the artist in question. But whatever its emotional accompaniments, it is in essence the will to make others cognizant of the character and personality which the artist, with the help of the playwright, has created. Impersonation as spontaneous self-expression is the effort to enlarge one's experience by living, for a time, in a different personality from one's own, and a different environment from one's everyday surroundings. William James once referred to it as *"stretching the ego,* to take in a strange personality." It is probable that no better popular definition could be found. (A scientific definition, as has already been said, is still to be formulated.) It will be seen that these two ideas of impersonation have no necessary connection, although their association in thought is natural enough. As we approach the subject of educational method the distinction must be kept clearly in mind.

Another association, even more persistent, confounds impersonation with *mimicry.* Teachers and writers who have broken away, in their thinking, from the dominance of the theater are often still bound by this conception. And here the distinction is more subtle, since the two things (impersonation and mimicry) are often concerned in the same act of self-expression. To make this point clear it will be necessary to revert to the subject of dramatic instinct, already dealt with briefly in Part Two. (See Chapter III.)

The mimetic instinct is seen in animals, where it exists wholly apart from dramatic instinct. It is also seen in very young children, even in infants. Here also it exists independently of dramatic instinct. When the child grows a little older, however, and begins to be conscious of itself as an individuality, the dramatic instinct begins to enter into cooperation with the mimetic instinct, at certain times. There will still be many occasions when the mimetic instinct is acting independently and simply, as in the infant or the puppy, and it may not be always possible for the

educator to distinguish by observation the independent action of the instinct of imitation from that wherein the dramatic instinct has a co-operating share.

The boy of five years may lift his cap as he watches his father greeting a lady, actuated by the almost unconscious instinct of imitation, or because he consciously admires his father and wishes to be like him. Dramatic instinct may be entirely unconcerned in the action. The same child, when playing with other children, may lift his cap in the same way, because for the time being he is the man of the house in the play. He is entering, so far as possible, into a larger personality and a different environment. Here is the action of the dramatic instinct. He is not trying to be *like* father. He is trying to *be* father, for the moment. In the operating of this instinct—the will to realize his own potential manhood —the adaptive instincts may all be involved. There is the overflow of surplus energy, the free, joyous activity, of play; there is the attentive observation, or recollection, of his father's habits, induced by curiosity; there is the more or less accurate imitation of his father's forms of expression, induced by the mimetic instinct. There is also something more than and behind all these—something which unifies and gives meaning to their activities and differentiates the human child from the kitten or the cub. This thing is the dramatic instinct.

The teacher, then, who is attempting to guide the activity of the dramatic instinct for educational ends should regard the instinct of imitation not as vital to the process, but only as an occasional accompaniment of it, useful if kept subordinate. As soon as mimicry becomes an end in itself it is apt to interfere with the natural function of the dramatic instinct. The fact that a child exhibits unusual gifts for mimicry does not of itself imply that his dramatic instinct is strong. In fact, he is very likely to develop into the kind of amateur player who insists on making every part a "character part." (All directors of young people know this type, and the ease with which they can upset the balance of a production.) Where the two instincts are both strong, and mimicry is properly subordinated to impersonation, we have the possible *actor*. But we are not considering methods of developing actors; we are concerned with a problem not so highly specialized, but of vastly more importance to the human race: the problem of utilizing and guiding a universal instinct for the development of personality and character. This distinction between mimicry and impersonation has a very direct and practical bearing on the subject of method, as will be seen later.

Still another element of confusion is introduced by the frequent failure to distinguish between *dramatic illusion* and actual illusion. No

definition of dramatic illusion will be attempted here, for this is unexplored territory in the field of consciousness, so far as scientific research is concerned; but if there is one thing we do know about it, it is that dramatic illusion is not at all the same thing as illusion in the accepted sense of that term. A person under an illusion in real life actually believes in the illusion, for the time being; or else, as in the familiar illustration of the stick half in water and half out, which appears bent, he knows that it is an illusion, but cannot change his *perception* of the stick as being bent. Neither of these things is true of dramatic illusion. As soon as a person experiencing dramatic illusion begins to believe in its actuality, it ceases at that moment to be *dramatic,* and becomes *actual* illusion, or more likely an hallucination (technically speaking). On the other hand, the spectator at a play can at will change his (imagined) "perception" of Hamlet to an actual perception of Mr. Barrymore, for example. The person who has an actual illusion is likely to act upon it in such a way as to produce a chain of consequences in his life; whereas dramatic illusion affects his actions only as it brings about changes in his attitudes. In other words, an illusion has, generally, a direct result in a man's life, while a dramatic illusion has an indirect one. A man who has had an illusion is exceedingly difficult to convince of its unreality; in fact, it will usually require tangible evidence to do it. But no sane person has to be taken behind the scenes after the play, and allowed to watch the actors remove their make-up in order to convince him that they are not Hamlet and Horatio in the flesh. And yet—here, indeed, is the mystery! —he has been for three hours *consenting* to their make-believe, to the extent, possibly, of feeling his own pulse beat heavily in sympathy with the horrors that beset the young prince.

The important point for us to note here is that this consenting is a voluntary act. Its pleasure rests on the fact that the spectator is perfectly aware that the events he is beholding are *not real.* If a man sitting in a theater watching a production of Hamlet should suddenly become possessed of the *illusion* that four persons on the stage were being murdered in one way and another, it is not likely that he would remain quietly in his chair, and the probability is that his direct and immediate reactions would end by putting him under lock and key.

This extreme illustration is not intended to be flippant, but only to make clear that dramatic illusion must not be confounded with actual illusion. There is an illustration of the distinction in the play itself; for the surmise that Hamlet counted on when he said,

"The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king"

was that dramatic illusion would in this case come so close to actual illusion that the king's reaction to it would be direct, immediate, and uncontrollable. The practical bearing of this distinction on the work of the director will be taken up somewhat more fully later on.

With these distinctions in mind, we may attempt a tentative definition as a working basis: *Impersonation is the voluntary assuming of a temporary personality different from one's own.*

The personality so assumed is known as the *dramatic personality.* Observation of the spontaneous play of children, and experimentation, carried on through years of work at the original Children's Educational Theater, under the direction of Emma Sheridan Fry, have yielded an outline of the normal process by which the dramatic personality is assumed.

1. *Analysis.* According to this outline, the first step in this process is an intellectual one, namely, analysis. It may be so abridged that it hardly seems to merit this name, but in some form or other it is probably always included. Suppose a child who loves the "Twice-Told Tales" is playing with a group not generally familiar with them. He says, "Let's play Hercules!" Someone says, "Who was *he?*" and another, "What did *he* do?" Explanations follow; possibly a little persuasion is needed, in the course of which the glories of the Grecian hero are proclaimed anew to the movie-calloused ears of the young Twentieth Century. Presently one young imagination takes fire. "All right! I'll be Hercules."

This disturbance is settled without shedding of blood, since the unwritten code gives the hero's part to the one who proposes the game; but a new question has been raised. "Well, say," asks a voice, "who else *is* there 'sides Hercules? What 're the *rest* of us gonna be?"

This brings about an enumeration of the *dramatis personae* and, inevitably, a quick evaluation of their characters and their importance in the story.

"What part do we play first?" asks someone. And in the next few moments the *plot* is practically determined. Possibly at this point the small Atlas cries out, "I choose the hay-wagon to stand on an' hold up the sky!" At once the other "principals" begin to look about for promising locations, and, in the turn of an eyelash, the stage is set!

Now, almost all that has happened so far belongs under the head of analysis, and is absolutely necessary as preparation for anything that could properly be called story-play. Anything *beyond* this, in the way of preparation, is dependent on the age of the players, their previous experience in story-playing, the amount of culture their dramatic instinct has received, etc.

2. *Wakening of Dramatic Imagination.* Now let us consider this

illustration a little more closely. When the little boy exclaimed, "I'll be Hercules!" he gave a clear indication of the awakening of dramatic imagination, and this is normally the *second* step in the process. It is clear that the members of the group do not pass from one step to the next at exactly the same time. Dramatic imagination wakens more readily in some children than in others. Indeed, the different steps in the process often overlap. It is often necessary to continue with analysis after dramatic imagination is awake. The important point for the director is that the wakening of dramatic imagination *follows* some sort of intellectual apprehension of the matter in hand. A child's imagination cannot exercise itself upon a subject of which he has no definite conception, and this conception is attained by the process we call analysis. It may seem to bear little relation to the long and subtle mental processes involved in a mature player's analysis of his part, but fundamentally it is the same thing. Sooner or later imagination is fired in the whole group, and parts are chosen, or, in cases of difficulty, arbitrarily assigned by the natural leader of the group.

3. *Rousing of Dramatic Instinct.* It may be that long before these necessary preliminaries are completed, some impatient child calls out: "Oh, come on—let's *play*. What's the use of *talking* all day?" Here, dramatic instinct (or impulse) has been aroused to the point of urgency; and this is normally the *third* step in the process. The desire to express in action what has been imagined naturally cannot precede the imagination itself.

4. *Attempting of Impersonation.* And so finally, with the absolutely essential analysis completed, dramatic imagination awake, and dramatic instinct roused, the children begin to play; that is, impersonation is attempted. At first, however, impersonation may consist of little more than taking the position assigned, moving to another place when the story demands it, and speaking a few words when necessary; and, in fact, with some children, the process, apparently, never passes beyond this point without the skilled assistance of an educational director.

5. *Characterization* (Achieving of Impersonation). This step is not so easy to define as the others, and the line of demarcation between it and the preceding step is often difficult to distinguish; but there is no mistaking the difference when the line has actually been crossed. Let us take a very simple illustration. Suppose Bobby, having chosen to be Atlas, climbs onto his wagon-mountain, when the play begins, and lifts his arms to a position suggesting the support of something, to be sure, but with a light and easy grace that would lead the beholder to visualize a tray of flowers on his extended hands, rather than the burden of a firma-

ment. His small figure is straight as an arrow, his head up, eyes sparkling, teeth flashing in a grin, and his toes fairly dancing with the joy of life. He is attempting to *impersonate* Atlas; but a passer-by, not knowing the game, would never guess it.

Now, suppose one of the other children, with a more highly developed dramatic sense, happens to pass Bobby's wagon in finding his own place. He glances up, and snorts: "Huh! Don't the sky *weigh* sumpthin'?" If Bobby has really passed through the other steps in the process of assuming the dramatic personality, this pointed question may be enough to work a surprising transformation. He begins to *feel* the weight of the sky pressing down, down—and, when Hercules arrives, he beholds a bent and stiffened figure, legs braced against the floor of the wagon, elbows crooked, muscles strained, chin dropped, and eyes peering out with an almost haggard expression. Bobby has reached the step of *characterization.*

Another child might have needed more help in reaching this stage; another might have reached it with no help at all. And still another, feeling the situation just as fully, might never under any conditions attain such verisimilitude of outward expression. The point of interest for the teacher is this: whether the outward expression is complete or incomplete, polished or crude, subtle or simple, it is not until some degree of characterization is achieved that the dramatic instinct is genuinely fulfilling its chief function.

Assuming the general hypothesis that, if dramatic expression is to be truly educative, we must follow nature's guidance in directing it, we find at this point the need for a still closer study of the process by which the child arrives at the *outward expression* of characterization. The first step in such a study was made years ago when Mrs. Fry observed that in the spontaneous dramatic play of children the processes leading from sensation, or perception, to action, in the case of any given stimulus, apparently followed exactly the natural law and the normal order. Without entering into the field of psychological controversy sufficiently to attempt a scientific description of this process, it is essential to have before us the outline on which Mrs. Fry based her studies and experimental research. This outline is as follows:

Contact.
Investigation.
Identification.
Readjustment (Intellectual and emotional).
Generation of energy.

Outflow of Impulse.
Expression.

It may be helpful to give some parallels between these terms and the language of the schools.

Contact obviously covers the processes of sensation and perception, and, in dramatic play, it means contact with some element in the *dramatic environment.* This element may be represented by a material object, or may exist wholly in the imagination. In the latter case there is no actual sensation, or even perception, in the ordinary sense of the term, but there is what we may *call* the "perception" of the thing imagined. Whether the object in question be material or only fancied, until we have a genuine perception of it, our process is not begun.

Investigation may cover only the lift of an eyelash, or it may occupy a considerable period of time. It involves the activity of the instinct of curiosity, the correlated exercise of different types of sense-perception, and the giving of *attention* to the object perceived. (In the dramatic field this is practically always *voluntary* attention; and one of the primary values claimed for the work is the training it involves in the conscious choice of "contacts," or objects of attention.)

Identification corresponds to the process referred to by the textbooks as "apperception." In some cases it consists simply in *recognition* of an object (or person); that is, in establishing the relationship between the idea of the object and other ideas already in the mind. Even this process, however, sometimes involves a complicated mental machinery, since a considerable search may be necessary among the ideas already in one's possession, to find the right ones with which to compare the idea in question, and finally the one to which it should be related.[1] But identification often involves more than this. It may have both an objective and a subjective phase; besides mere recognition of the identity of the object (or person) there may be the recognition of its significance to the subject in that particular time and place. As, for instance, to identify a moving object in the night as a man may have no personal meaning, if one is out on the street; but to identify the same moving object as a man in one's own house, busied about one's safe, has distinctly a subjective as well as an objective phase.

[1]Some psychologists would say that the object is not truly *perceived* until this phase of identification, at least, is accomplished; and, indeed, the behaviorists acknowledge no essential difference between perception and apperception, since, "In either case, the present experience is given its meaning in terms of the past behavior in regard to similar experiences" (*Human Behavior,* Colvin and Bagley).

It will easily be seen that it is the subjective phase of identification that especially concerns us, for on this there follows the emotional *readjustment,* or "re-conditioning" (Mrs. Fry's word) of the organism which finally results in action. Where identification is merely objective, the readjustment which follows it is mainly (if not wholly) *intellectual;* but where identification is also subjective, the readjustment is also *emotional* or at least *affectional;* and it is this emotional, or affectional, readjustment which is evidently the source of *impulse* (except in cases of responses that have become automatic in the race, and with those we are not especially concerned).

Emotional or affectional readjustment is sometimes no more than a slight raising or lowering of the general "feeling-tone" of the organism: one is mildly pleased, or displeased at the appearance of a certain person coming toward one on a quiet street. Or, on the other hand, it may mean a tumult of deep and conflicting emotions. But whether simple or complex, it appears to be out from this emotional readjustment that there arises the *impulse* to voluntary action, at least in the great majority of cases. When we inquire into the exact relation between these two things (emotion and impulse), we approach the very mystery of conscious life itself. But even though that mystery is beyond our solution, the educational dramatic director will be inevitably forced to do more or less thinking about it. In such thinking the following suggestions may prove helpful.

In the first place, there is the seeming paradox pointed out many years ago by William James, when he said that a man does not run away from a bear because he is afraid, but he is afraid because he runs. If this is true (and it probably cannot be denied), it seems to mean that there are cases where impulse follows immediately upon apperception (or identification) without the intermediary step of *emotional* readjustment. This fact, however, need not confuse our thinking, for it is probable that what happens in such cases is something like this: the idea of a bear is, through long habit, automatically associated in the mind with the idea of great danger. Now, the instinct of self-preservation (or "necessary interest of the mind," if one prefers the phrase) has brought it about that the impulse to flee from danger follows automatically on the *apperception* of the dangerous object. Therefore the man begins to run, on recognizing the bear, before there is time for the *emotional* reaction to be set up. But there has nevertheless been a violent and sudden readjustment of the whole being which results probably during the next few seconds in a profound emotional disturbance. This type of reaction need not greatly concern us, for it is not in the least char-

acteristic of serious drama. It is, on the other hand, a part of the stock-in-trade of farce—particularly with certain comedians of the moving pictures. (Anyone who has seen Charles Chaplin reverse his direction instantly and automatically, on coming suddenly face to face with a pursuing foe, but without the slightest facial indication of any emotion at all, will remember that it seems at the moment the very essence of the ludicrous. Why this should be so is a tempting question for speculation, but slightly aside from our subject.)

In the second place, we should not allow our thinking to become confused by the fact that in real life the first indication, through action, of a given impulse may come at a time considerably later than the receiving of the stimulus which produced it. It has already been remarked that the period of investigation may be greatly prolonged. A person, let us say, makes a decision, takes a step, which appears sudden to his friends. They question him as to his reasons and he answers that this decision is mainly the result of the impression made upon him by a speech which he heard a year before. He has since been investigating the statements which so impressed him, to ascertain if they were true. He is now convinced of their truth, and therefore has acted in accordance with his first impression. In this case the fact probably is that the process we have been outlining, from sensation up to impulse, at least, actually took place at the time when the man heard the speech. There may even have been some incomplete expression of the impulse. He may have gone up to shake hands with the speaker. But his reason, aided possibly by inhibitions that have become a part of his nature, has checked further expression, until the process of investigation should be completed. During this period of research it is probable that the complete process, from sensation to action, takes place many times, started by a stimulus allied to that which produced the original impression. If the impulse is not allowed to die, through being repeatedly denied all expression, it is likely that the expression, when it does come, has behind it the cumulative force of the energy generated at repeated intervals throughout the progressive readjustment which has been taking place.

Now, while the possibility of this prolonged and elaborated process must be taken into account by the director, it will be principally during the period of *analysis* that he will consider it. When he comes to *rehearsal* he will be dealing almost entirely with the shorter and simpler forms of the process. It is sufficient for our purposes to realize that an impulse must follow some sort of readjustment of the organism, in response to a stimulus, whether that stimulus is actual and immediate, or recreated through memory and imagination.

It is not necessary to enter into any discussion of the next step in Mrs. Fry's outline, *"generation of energy,"* since this concerns the physiological side of the process. The director knows that in a normal and healthy person energy is available for all reasonable demands of impulse; that is, such impulses as would be induced by the ordinary dramatic representation. The question of how or when that energy is generated, whether the impulse itself is a transformer that converts potential energy into dynamic—these matters are no necessary concern of his, however fascinating he may personally find the problem. The important point for him to recognize is that the potential energy in the body is converted into dynamic energy for the expression of an impulse, normally only as a result of a genuine readjustment in the feelings or in both the intellect and the feelings.

Regarding the next step, *impulse,* it is essential that the director should recognize certain things. First, no *voluntary* action takes place except as the result of impulse. One psychologist has said that as there is no motion in the steam engine without steam, so there is no motion in the human body without the impulse.

Second, in real life the only impulses which are genuine, and truly self-revealing, are those which are the natural result of a process actually experienced by the person concerned. No person can have a genuine impulse as a result of a sensation, perception, apperception, and emotional reaction experienced by another person; his impulse, to be valid, must arise out of his *own* experience of these things. For example, if the instinct of imitation arouses in a small child the impulse to cry because his brother is crying, he is revealing a characteristic of the *race,* but he is not revealing his *individuality.* Or, if the instinct of fear arouses an impulse to do a certain thing because he knows he will be punished for not doing it, the same thing is true: he is obeying a racial impulse, rather than one which has to do with the manifestation of his own character as an individual. This kind of "borrowed" impulse is another favorite device of farce and burlesque, but would seldom be involved in serious drama, doubtless because serious drama is concerned chiefly with character, with individuality, and therefore with differences. Farce amuses us by showing us how much alike we all are; serious drama interests us by showing us how different we are. (It must be remembered that "serious drama" does not mean necessarily grave or solemn drama. The type known as "romantic comedy" is, in the sense in which we are using the term, "serious drama.")

Expression corresponds to *action,* in general; that is, it is by no means confined to verbal, or even to vocal expression, but includes anything and

everything the person may do in response to impulse. The first fact for us to note with reference to expression is that in real life, in the great majority of cases, the response of the body to impulse is apparently automatic. The notable exception to this is the *unaccustomed* activity, in which the muscles must be trained to a new coordination; the nerves to a new type of control. In such cases the body may refuse to respond accurately to a given impulse until after repeated efforts. It is an interesting problem, however, in such a matter as learning to play the piano, for example, how far the faulty coordination is due to a lack of definiteness, of sureness, in the impulse itself. A famous musician was giving a lesson on the piano and suggested a certain effect that should be achieved in a passage being played. The pupil protested, "But I have not the technique to *do* that!"

"Nonsense!" replied the teacher. "If you *feel* it that way, you can play it so."

This problem, also, is of exceptional occurrence in dramatic action. If an actor unfamiliar with the technique of fencing is cast for a part involving a duel with swords, his first responses to the impulse to "touch" his opponent will naturally not be automatic. Many a serenade scene has been rendered unconvincing by the obvious lack of automatic response of the fingers plucking the strings of the guitar on the stage to the impulses actually producing the music, somewhere behind the scenes.

In all ordinary matters of everyday life the response of the body to impulse takes place without our *conscious* attention to the manner of the response. This is so generally recognized that when a person is observed to be giving such attention to the ordinary movements of the hands, for instance, he or she is apt to be described as "affected." The professional actor, whose art must express itself through the medium of his whole body as an instrument, finds it necessary to study these responses with minute attention, and to increase their variety and flexibility in his own body by long practice. During this period of practice there is likely to be a transitional phase, when the new forms of expression have not become familiar enough to follow impulses without more or less conscious attention, and therefore the person appears "self-conscious" or inclined to "pose." When this stage has been passed, no more conscious attention is needed for the newly acquired forms of expression than for many others, and we say that the new grace and flexibility of expression have become "second nature." The educational dramatic director should remember that his aim is not the training of actors for the stage, but the development of character and personality in individuals who are to express themselves in everyday contacts with their fellow men.

CHAPTER VIII

BASIS OF EDUCATIONAL DRAMATIC METHOD

THE educational discovery to which we have referred, at the Educational Alliance, can be briefly expressed in two statements. *First,* when the dramatic instinct of children is manifesting itself quite spontaneously, without guidance or interference from adults, this life-process leading from sensation to action (contact to expression) follows exactly the natural law and the normal order. Once a real contact is established with a certain element in the dramatic environment, the rest of the process takes place as naturally, as "unconsciously," as in real life. In other words, the little girl playing the part of a pioneer woman, when she "perceives" an Indian lurking behind a tree, aiming an arrow at something, has no need to ask herself, "Now, how would a pioneer woman behave under such circumstances?"—nor even, "How would she *feel?*". Investigation follows "instinctively": she turns to see what it is the Indian intends to kill. Now, suppose she identifies the target as her "child," in the play. This point in the process is naturally difficult (if not impossbile) to test by laboratory methods, but observation of the result indicates that a readjustment (both intellectual and emotional) takes place, on the recognition, which, however subtly it may differ from that occasioned by such an apperception in real life, is like it in this: that out from it there arises a *genuine impulse* which is followed by outward expression as automatically as it would be in real life. The little "mother" probably makes a dash for her "child" and runs off with her, rending the air with screams so realistic that her own mother rushes to a window to find out what has happened.

The great difficulty in making valid observations of this type of play is that the mere presence of an adult who is felt by the children to be an "observer" is often sufficient to disturb the automatic precision of the process, by causing consciousness to intrude and attempt to guide it. The disturbance doubtless goes back to the first step in the process: contact. At least, it affects the second phase of "contact": perception. This is because the child is unable to yield himself completely to his dramatic imagination, and so establish dramatic *illusion* fully, when he is conscious of the presence of a person who is not *sharing* the dramatic illusion. This means that the little girl's *perception* of the boy behind

the tree, *as an Indian,* is not clear and convincing. It is made inoperative, as regards the life-process, by the obtruding consciousness that Sammy is, after all, a rosy-cheeked boy with tousled yellow hair, in an Indian play suit.

The little girl may go on with the play, and if the adult watcher is unaccustomed to making close and intelligent observation of dramatic expression, he may possibly not recognize the vital difference between this and truly spontaneous play. The educational dramatic director would doubtless detect the difference in several ways. The girl's eyes, as she turns to look for her "child," will probably have no expression of alarm. She may even be smiling. There will be less energy expended as she drags her away; and her scream will not disturb the serenity of her mother in the house.

The process has been deflected at its source; it has become simply a matter of carrying out a prearranged plan, with a part of the mind occupied in considering the effect on the observer. (The *result* of this consideration, in the child's mental state, naturally depends on whether her self-feeling is predominantly negative or positive.) The "contact" with the dramatic environment has not been sound and sure; the investigation has been half-hearted and incomplete; the identification has failed to be convincing; the readjustment has (probably) been merely intellectual; the *impulse* (to run, to scream, etc.) has really arisen, *not* from this readjustment, nor from any step in the mental process directly connected with the perception of the boy behind the tree, but from a memory of the general plot of the "action," and a desire to be equal to the occasion—to "play her part" creditably—perhaps even to astonish the observer with her "acting"; and consequently the outward expression, or action, does not result automatically from the impulse which would naturally produce it, but is *dictated* by a totally different impulse, entirely unconcerned with the dramatic situation—an impulse which is concerned with real-life relationships and interests, not at all with the "persons of the play."

The game has thus ceased to be "spontaneous dramatic play"; and whatever values may be claimed for it, we must definitely recognize that they are not the *same.*

The second point in this discovery is that if the dramatic instinct is to fulfill its distinctive function, and dramatic expression have its full educational value for the individual, this process, from contact to expression, must follow the natural law and the normal order. This is not the place to enter into a full discussion of the reasons for this statement, but a few suggestions may help to guide the director's thinking.

There is always danger in using an analogy which is not exactly parallel; but, if we admit the obvious differences, it may be safe to risk a comparison. The instinct of hunger leads a man to eat food. After this action the processes of digestion take place automatically, without conscious attention from him. If his attention is attracted to the process, it is an indication that something is wrong. Now, suppose that his impulse to partake of food has been artificially induced, by the display of triumphs of the culinary art; the digestive process will still be automatic, and practically unconscious, unless he has overtaxed his capacity of assimilation. In this case the instinct of hunger has not had a chance to fulfill its natural function—to provide energy for the body—and consequently the *forced* digestive process is causing actual injury to the delicate mechanism of the body, indicated to the subject, doubtless, by pain, or at least discomfort. Even when there is no immediate result in consciousness, harm is being done which, if the injury to the system is too often repeated, will result in serious disorder.

So, when the activity of the dramatic instinct is *induced,* by presenting to the individual imaginative material that tempts him to the "vicarious experience" of impersonation, the process leading from his first "contact" with the elements of the dramatic environment to the corresponding action, or "expression," should follow automatically the laws that govern this process in his everyday life. Whenever consciousness is centered on any phase of the process, whenever the *attention* of the individual is directed to the *manner* of his response (with certain obvious exceptions, such as the mastering of unaccustomed movements), the process at that moment ceases to be quite normal, and consequently the dramatic instinct is not completely fulfilling its primary function. It is true that certain *incidental* values of dramatic expression may be conserved. It is also true that the director will probably be unable entirely to prevent the occasional intrusion of the player's consciousness into the process. A player who does not understand the method, for instance, will sometimes attempt to help a fellow player with suggestions as to "gestures," etc., thereby at times undoing several minutes' careful work, by directing the player's *attention* to his form of expression and distracting it from the dramatic situation. This sort of interference, however, occurs only in groups unacquainted with the method, and an educational director working with a new group has need of patience.

Such occasional deviations, while unfortunate and to be avoided so far as possible, do not nullify the values of the work. But the director should be keenly aware of the dangers involved in a method which *depends* upon the player's conscious attention to the manner of his re-

sponses and the form of his expression. In such a case not only is the dramatic instinct being prevented from normal functioning but actual injury may be done to the personality of the player. To appreciate this danger one must realize something of the peculiar nature of the impulses involved. The majority of dramatic situations involve *emotions,* instead of merely intellectual processes—or blind habit, or the easy, absent-minded, almost unconscious carrying out of a predetermined plan, as is the case with many of the situations in our daily lives. In fact, it might be said that if there were no emotions involved, we should not describe a given situation as "dramatic." This means that the impulses from which dramatic action springs are, normally, *emotional* impulses; that is, impulses which arise out of an emotional readjustment. Now, suppose that throughout the period of rehearsal of a certain dramatic scene the player has been allowed repeatedly to act on impulses *other* than those naturally arising out of the emotional readjustment he is supposed to experience. Various impulses may be induced which are totally unrelated to the dramatic situation. For example, the player may sincerely desire to please the director and may therefore attempt to imitate a movement, gesture, or tone of voice, without having passed through even the nimbus of a genuine emotional experience. He may wish to be considered "talented" by his fellow players, or prospective audience, and therefore *study* the forms of his expression, as he has been informed that actors study theirs. At the risk of wearisome repetition, we must continue to remind ourselves that we are not aiming to train actors for the stage. Nor, it may be added, are we endeavoring to "coach" a group of amateurs in an *imitation* of the art of acting. It is to be feared that many directors who would readily assent to the first statement might fail to see the significance of the second. A director's assertion that he is not trying to develop actors by no means proves that he understands the fundamental differences between educational dramatic directing and professional coaching.

A player is often misled by a director who is sincerely trying to follow educational method, but without a clear knowledge of its principles. Such a director may say to the player in a dramatic crisis, "Now, if you really *were* that person, how would you *feel?*" And later, "Well, how would you probably express that feeling?" This is requiring the player to give his attention to introspection and analysis when he should be free to concentrate upon the situation, the relationships involved, the underlying purposes of the character he is impersonating, etc. Still more fatal to spontaneous expression is the director who smilingly invites the self-conscious player to "just be natural"! The only remedy

for "self-consciousness" (as the phrase is commonly employed) is to get one's attention centered on something *outside oneself*.

Suppose, however, that the player, self-conscious and uncomfortable though he may be, attempts, through some motive extraneous to the dramatic situation, to achieve the physical form of expression which he, or the director, conceives to fit the case. If this process is repeated throughout a considerable period of rehearsal (perhaps through various productions), the danger is that the individual is forming a *habit* of arriving at expression by a circuitous route. Instead of allowing the life-process which culminates in outward expression to take its normal, direct course, he interrupts it by giving conscious attention to the manner of the response. This habit is altogether likely to be carried over into the situations of real life, and the final effect on his personality may be long in working itself out. If his self-feeling is predominantly negative, he may suffer an access of inhibiting self-consciousness. If, on the other hand, his self-feeling is strongly positive, he may acquire an "affected" manner. It should be noted in passing that there is a difference between affectation and the vanity which, on making a gesture, is pleasantly conscious of its grace. The latter is not necessarily destructive of sincerity, in spite of its obvious dangers. One who has been fortunate enough to see Mr. Hampden's production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" will recall an amusing illustration of this distinction, when Cyrano answers Le Bret's remonstrance over his having flung his entire "monthly remittance" to the manager by saying, ingenuously, "But—what a gesture!" In Mr. Hampden's playing of the part the difference between Cyrano's original gesture (grandiose, to be sure, but not "affected") and his own self-conscious, awkward imitation of it afterward is delightfully true to the laws governing expression in real life.

Relation of the Dramatic and the Permanent Personalities.—When we attempt to trace the exact relation between the "dramatic" or assumed personality and the Self, we are again in a "dark continent" so far as psychological exploration is concerned. This is not to be wondered at. Psychology is a young science, only just breaking loose from the apron-strings of Philosophy, and hounded on all sides by those who desire increase of knowledge of the human mind in order to control, exploit, or guide it. We are only on the threshold of the New World that it may reveal to us. It is not strange that time has not been found to investigate extensively a phase of human behavior which has not been generally regarded as of great and universal import to the race. Certain general observations, however, may help the director to avoid blunders. It must be clearly understood that the following remarks are not intended to cover

all cases; the intention is, rather, to point out the *normal* experience as distinguished from the unusual.

When the process of assuming the dramatic personality is complete, and characterization has been achieved, this does not mean, normally, that the permanent personality—the Self—is actually set aside, or suffers a condition of suspended animation. In other words, it does not mean that conditions similar to those of a case of "dual personality" exist. This would seem to be a self-evident fact, and yet the attitude of some directors leads one to suppose they desire their players to approach as nearly as possible to such a pathological condition. A director should regard as an indication of danger any sign that a player is losing the clear sense of distinction between the dramatic situation and real life, or between the personality he is assuming and his proper self. While this condition is unusual, it does occasionally occur, and the director should be quick to observe the danger signals. If a player does not find it easy, on an interruption, to slip out of his assumed personality, and return to his own customary forms of self-expression, the director should take warning. (This has no reference, naturally, to cases where a player's resentfulness of an interruption, or sheer overflow of spirits and enjoyment, leads to a deliberate refusal to drop out of his part.)

If a player becomes obsessed with his part, so that he cannot sleep at night, and suffers a loss of efficiency in his daily life through absent-mindedness, this, again, is a warning that should not be disregarded.

Above all, if dramatic illusion tends to pass over into actual illusion, and the player's emotional reactions appear *uncontrollable,* as they might be in a similar situation in real life, there is serious danger.

The normal conditions of impersonation appear to be as follows: In some way which we cannot yet define or understand the self is evidently present, fully conscious of what is being done, but voluntarily lending the body, its instrument of expression, to another personality, which has been created by itself, through dramatic imagination. (For, no matter what the playwright may have done, each player must himself "create" his character.) But, though Apollo lend his chariot to the driving of a mortal, he must be near by, to take command when the sun's course grows erratic or its light burns dim.

Conclusion.—Before proceeding to the application of these fundamental principles to the different departments of the Church School, it may help to clarify our thinking if we consider for a moment the probable origin of certain common misapprehensions with regard to "educational dramatics."

The world has been accustomed for many centuries to regard "act-

ing" as one of the fine arts. It is understood that the actor must master the technique of his instrument, which is his body, as a violinist or a pianist must master his chosen vehicle of expression, a painter his brushes, and a sculptor his chisel. This is perfectly true; but it is also true that there is a vital distinction between the violinist's or the sculptor's problem and that of the actor. Whereas the instruments of the former are foreign to themselves, the actor's instrument is his very self. The infant is not born with a violin in his hands, nor would he be able to achieve anything like genuine self-expression through a violin for some years after birth; on the other hand, a baby begins using his body as a vehicle of expression as soon as he is born—and it does not take him long to discover the effectiveness of certain forms of expression. He is, in some sense, an "actor" long before the fondest parent, in expectation of genius, would place a bow in his hand or give him a paint-box as a plaything. By the time the dramatic instinct urges him to attempt impersonation, he has already mastered the technique of his instrument sufficiently for all ordinary demands the impulse will make upon it. He needs no one to show him how to smile, to speak, to shout, to wave his hand, to nod or shake his head, to walk or run, to slap, or to caress. In fact, as has been pointed out, he does not even have to think how these things are done. It is obvious that he has not yet completely mastered his instrument. His enunciation and articulation may be faulty, his muscular control not fully developed, his inflections somewhat lacking in variety. A part of this incompleteness of expression is due to immaturity of both the physical and mental life. But—and here is the point of interest for us—development along these lines is absolutely necessary to him if he is to grow into a well-rounded human being living in a social environment.

To be able to play the violin brings to its master a new world of experience and enjoyment; but one cannot say that this ability is *essential* to a complete human development. For there are other means of enlarging one's life besides this particular form of expression. It may be that the individual needs, for happiness, some form of self-expression through a medium extraneous to his own personality. But he cannot possibly cultivate all the forms dependent on such media and consequently no *one* of them can be considered as essential to human development. On the other hand, if the youth fails to overcome certain obvious childish weaknesses in the technique of the instrument of expression which is his body (such as a lisp, for example), these may prove a serious handicap in his social relationships. Even supposing he has no such noticeable defects, just so far as he lacks firmness of control, fineness of coordination, and flexibility of modulation in the handling of his instrument, so far will he fall short

of the richest and most satisfying life among his fellows. Whatever other instruments he may learn to play, the exercise of these arts is more or less occasional, whereas the instrument of his own personality is his constant medium of communication with his fellow men. Without it he could not make himself known to anyone.

Let us accept the fact, then, that the acquirement of a certain amount of technique of expression (of voice, movement, facial expression, etc.) is necessary not only to the "actor" but to every human being. This, of course, is quite commonly understood; confusion seems to arise from a failure to make the following distinction:

The actor's art requires the study of different types of instruments, and the mastery, to a greater or less extent, of the varying *styles* of technique appropriate to them. If we may venture so absurd a comparison, it is almost as if a musician were assigned to the place of first violin one night, the French horn the next, and the kettledrum the third. For each performance he would find it necessary to master a new technique. In every case a totally new series of muscular coordinations would have to be acquired through *conscious attention* and practice. The actual musical elements, however, the tones of the scale and intervals, would remain the same. The intellectual and emotional content of the music would also be a constant factor; it would be true, no matter which instrument he happened to be using, that a given passage played at a certain tempo would create the effect intended by the composer, whereas rendered at a quicker tempo, it would have a totally different character, etc.

It is clear that such a feat of versatility, were it possible, could be accomplished only by an artist who had a thorough knowledge of the elements of music, and of the canons which govern its rendition through any and all instruments. Even so the actor must study the technique of expression of each particular type of character which he impersonates; and in order to do this successfully he needs a knowledge of the *elements* of expression and of the emotional value of different forms, different tempos, etc. In other words, for the sake of his art, he must systematize, and master intellectually, a whole body of knowledge of which the average human being has only an intuitive or emotional consciousness.

Such a master of music as we have imagined would assuredly have a right to the title of "musician." On the other hand, it is perhaps only the musically unsophisticated who refer to everyone who happens to play a musical instrument acceptably as a "musician." A person may acquire the technique of a particular instrument and still have very little understanding of the elements and laws of music. (It is to be re-

marked that the present generation of Americans is experiencing a distinct increase of sophistication in this respect.) Just so, it is doubtless amusing to the professional to hear amateurs referred to as "actors," and rightly so. (There is, of course, the occasional member of a group of amateur players who develops dramatic *talent,* and eventually becomes an actor, but this is an exception.) The average amateur player is doing, or should be doing, what the average violin player is doing: using his one instrument, with a technique already become, to a large extent, automatic, to express the varying moods and emotions which, through the medium of the musician's (or the playwight's) composition, and the exercise of his own imagination, he vicariously experiences.

"But," someone may ask, "does not this viewpoint greatly limit the range of types which any one player can impersonate?" True, one does not expect the violin to sound the call to arms, or the saxaphone to breathe a lullaby; that is, one does not expect these ventures as numbers in a concert program—especially when one has paid a dollar or two for a ticket. However, the violinist may broaden his range of appreciation in the privacy of home, by playing the "Marseillaise"; and the saxophonist may be allowed the indulgence (if his neighbors are kind) of attempting to render the "Chanson d'Inde." The music teacher who would encourage such experiments in private, as a means of broadening his pupils' musical appreciation, would doubtless see to it that no such inappropriate assignment found its way on to a recital program.

So the amateur player, in a public production, should be assigned a part not entirely beyond the range of the only instrument of expression of which he has already mastered the technique. On the other hand, where dramatic expression is being guided primarily for the development of character and personality in the players, the director who can add patience to some knowledge of educational method will find it wise occasionally to make assignments which would appear to an unenlightened observer deliberately perverse. Through the vicarious experience of genuine impersonation the saxophone voice may reveal new tones of tenderness; the violin notes rise to the clangor of war-drum and trumpet. And the fact that a new field of experience has been entered, a new form of expression compassed, even for a moment, is by no means a negligible factor in the player's growth.

But the player, be it noted, under educational guidance, has not achieved the new forms of expression by the methods of the professional actor. He has made no conscious study of the techniqu of exprssion appropriate to the type he is impersonating, except, to be sure, in the most general way. In the preliminary discussions of the characters the

director may have asked whether such a man ordinarily speaks in a gruff or a gentle tone, or whether that kind of girl moves quickly or slowly as a rule. Such questions help to waken dramatic imagination. But if the player finally achieves the tone and manner appropriate to the part, it will not be through a conscious adoption of a new technique; rather, the form of expression will be the automatic culmination of a normal life-precess which originated in his first real "contact" with the given dramatic environment.

This the professional "coach" does not generally understand. It has been customary to regard a group of amateurs desiring to produce a play as very fortunate if they could prevail upon a "coach" from the professional field to direct their efforts. But consider for a moment the natural attitude of such a director. He knows, with systematic, classified knowledge, the style of technique appropriate to each type of personality-instrument represented in the play. The players obviously have not this technical knowledge. It seems clear to him that the thing for him to do is to give them the benefit of his superior knowledge of the elements of expression in the quickest and most direct way. The method which first suggests itself is that of "setting a copy" for each player to follow; in other words, relying on the imitation, by the player, of certain forms of expression.

A professional coach—himself an actor—was asking assistance in finding players for an amateur production. In referring to several busy students who were to take part, he said: "Tell them simply to memorize their lines, and then come to rehearsal about two weeks before the production. They needn't worry about anything else; I'll give them all the 'business'—all the gestures, etc." Here we have the extreme of the professional viewpoint. It is being modified in many quarters to-day by a general feeling that amateur playing should probably be more "spontaneous." The graduates of certain supposedly progressive schools of expression will say, "We use *dictation* (of form of expression) only as a last resort; in cases where the player fails to attain the right expression through the use of other methods." A little observation of their work, however, will often reveal that when they speak of getting "spontaneous" work from a player, they mean something like this: he is to be encouraged to give the same *kind* of study to his part that a professional actor would give it; he is to consider the forms of expression suitable to his "character"; he is to "think up business for himself."

All this is dealing with him as if he were an *artist.* Now, the director knows that he is not an artist; he probably knows it himself, in the depths of his heart. Consequently, the whole procedure is at once

placed upon an artificial basis. It is "make-believe." Moreover, it tends to make the whole thing an *individualistic* effort at self-expression. Once this point of view is acquired by an amateur player, it is very nearly fatal to any genuine or convincing characterization. It is an easy matter, generally, to pick out the members of a cast who have experienced "coaching" from this viewpoint. They feel that their "interpretation" of their part is their own affair—to be kept somewhat as a mystery until the last moment. They will sometimes draw the director aside (after he, or she, has been making an effort to get from them something like a genuine response to the situation) and explain gently and condescendingly that they don't care to put much into their *expression* during rehearsals—but the director need not worry, they have some ideas for "business," etc., and they'll put feeling enough into it when the time comes! If the director has any suggestions, they would prefer to have these given in private, not before the cast, etc. (Any educational director with some years of experience could say this speech backward.)

Here we see the maleficent shadow of the "star" system (as it is popularly conceived) on our commercial stage. It is as if the individual player regarded himself as a soloist who is to play a piano selection with orchestral accompaniment. It is unfortunately necessary that he should try the piece through once or twice with the others, in order to insure *their* understanding of *his* tempo, mood, etc. The idea that he might deepen and enrich his own interpretation by playing the piece through with the orchestra again and again would hardly occur to him. Lest this illustration be considered too extreme, it may be added that the theory has actually been set forth in print that the director of an amateur play should be regarded as the conductor of an orchestra, and the players as the members of it; it is not their business to understand the whole effect aimed at by the "conductor"; all they need do is to play their own instruments to the best of their ability and not concern themselves about their neighbors' playing.

The use of such an illustration indicates an absolute lack of comprehension of this simple fact: that spontaneous dramatic expression is primarily a *social* process. The educational director, in most of his work, is dealing not merely with a certain number of individuals, but with a *group*—a social unit. A man who had lived all his life on a desert island, without human companionship, would have very little of what we call "personality," for personality, from our present viewpoint, is the sum total of a man's modes and habits of expression, the media of his communication with the world about him. Such a man would have estab-

lished no such modes or habits. The man who can find in the Forest of Arden "Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything," is the man whose life has been enriched by years of intercommunication with his kind. And even the solitary Jacques, philosophizing to the brook, knew that he could presently repeat his musings for the edification of the sylvan court. In short, the development of personality, in real life, is a social process. So the normal development of a given "dramatic personality" is a social process—for which the orchestral simile is in no sense a parallel.

Someone may be asking, "If the director's work is not to 'set copy' for his players, and not even to instill a knowledge of the actor's technique suitable to each part, what is it?" We may well close this section with a brief summary of the educational director's work in guiding the development of the dramatic personality.

In the first place, the director is to assist the player to create a background of sympathetic understanding, not simply of his own part, but of all the "persons of the play," and of the situations represented. (This understanding will naturally continue to grow in depth and clarity during the whole period of work on the play.)

Then, in rehearsal, the director must see to it that the player establishes sound, strong *contacts* with the elements of the dramatic environment; that *investigation* is actually carried on; that *identification* is complete; that *readjustment,* both intellectual and emotional, really takes place; and that a genuine *impulse* arises from the emotion experienced.

Not until this much of the process has been covered is he ready to help the player definitely to open up new channels of expression, or those long blocked by inhibitions of one sort and another; or to lead him to put aside habitual mannerisms and return to a child-like simplicity and directness of response. Before the director can encourage and develop expression the player must have something to *express.*

One of the frequent difficulties with which the educational director has to contend is the amateur player who "thinks up business" for the others, and suggests it to them, when the director is aware that the player being so "assisted" needs above all else to forget himself, and his instrument of expression, and become absorbed in the dramatic situation, the other characters, and his relations with them. When the director, developing a tense moment in rehearsal, has at last succeeded in leading a player through the life-process from contact to impulse, and recognizes, with an inward sigh of relief and satisfaction, the awkward, abortive attempt at expression which reveals to his practiced eye the reality of the emotion prompting it; just at this moment, to have one of the other

players (who sees only the awkwardness, and possibly recalls a bit of "business" given by some "coach") exclaim, "You know, I think if he would raise his hands and clench his fists, *this* way, it would be good!"—well, these are the moments that require grace. There is nothing to be done but drop the scene (that is, that particular incident) at once, remarking lightly, "Well, perhaps he *will* do that, eventually; we can't tell yet what he will do," or something of the sort.[1] The director should not be too much discouraged by such incidents, however, for it is likely that the genuine *experience* through which the player has just passed will "hold over" until the next rehearsal of the scene, whereas the unfortunate interruption may be forgotten. In fact, the emotion may deepen as the player thinks it over and the director may discover at the next rehearsal a sound basis of "vicarious experience" from which to develop expression. For one of the most cheering and fascinating things about the educational director's work is the way in which the life-processes, once started, go on and work themselves out, sometimes with very little direct effort. In many cases, when the final step of characterization is achieved, it seems to have blossomed magically, overnight. And yet, marvelous and thrilling as it is to see this happen, the director knows that it is not magic any more than the development of our own proper personalities is magic. We know little enough of the complex workings of heredity, training, and environment that have produced them, but we are sure they did not just "happen so." The growth of a "dramatic personality," likewise, if it is to have genuineness and spontaneity, must be in keeping with the laws of life.

[1]A professional director in his own field, naturally, would not tolerate such volunteered suggestions from the cast; but the educational director must not sacrifice the democratic spirit and enthusiastic interest in the production as a whole that make the work truly *social.*

CHAPTER IX

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Beginners and Primary Departments

(Review pages 30-32 and 41-47)

The following pages are intended to furnish an outline as a guide to teachers and others interested in establishing dramatic expression as a regular and integral factor in the program of religious education. Hardly *more* than an outline will be possible, but if the student has made himself familiar with the general principles stated in the foregoing pages, he should be able to make a beginning of their practical application with the aid of these additional suggestions. It will be found helpful to review the sections in Part Two which deal with material appropriate to the different departments of the Church School, in connection with the corresponding sections here. (For the convenience of the student the page references have been given in each case.)

The work of each department is treated under the following heads: Motive (the player's), Time and Place, Leadership, Method, and Values. Material is dealt with only incidentally here, since the first two parts of the manual are almost entirely taken up with that subject. It is strongly urged that only those who have studied Parts One and Two should attempt to build a program on the following outline.

Where two departments are grouped together it is because the members of both belong in the same general period, as regards the development of the dramatic instinct.

The children in these two departments are, generally speaking, in the period of spontaneous dramatic play, or games. Left to themselves, they would hardly arrive at genuine "story-play" before the end of the Primary Department. It is perfectly natural, however, for the normal development to be somewhat hastened by the special culture afforded in a school where dramatic expression is a regular part of the work. Consequently, some simple story-play may be attempted in the Primary department.

Motive.—The motive should be the immediate satisfaction of the dramatic instinct itself. The impulse to impersonate may be deliberately induced by the teacher, through the suggestion of suitable dramatic

material; but, with rare exceptions, the children should play dramatic games, not to please the teacher, nor to entertain visitors, nor with the conscious objective of a public performance, but simply because it is their nature to play in this way and they enjoy it.

Time and Place.—Wherever a group has a room for its own use during the regular sessions of the Church School, there is no intrinsic objection to making dramatic play a part of the class activities on Sunday (assuming that the subject-matter is definitely related to the theme of the day's lesson). This is particularly true with the Beginners.

If the whole Primary Department has its class sessions in the same room, the dramatic feature of the work may take place during the general part of the day's program, when the classes are united, provided the department is not too large.

In cases where a teacher can give some time during the week to her class, or there is a regular dramatic director, it will be found advisable to supplement the small amount of work that may be done on Sunday with an hour during the week, when more freedom will be possible, as to space, noise, etc. Week-day play may take place wherever it may be convenient—indoors or out.

Leadership.—If dramatic play is to be a regular feature of the Sunday sessions, it is probably best that the regular teacher of each group should be the leader of her own pupils, if she is competent to direct them. There will thus be less danger that the play will cease to be truly spontaneous through the children's consciousness of an unaccustomed presence. However, where a dramatic director can have the children frequently enough, on week-day afternoons, so that they accept her as one of the group, and feel that she is really playing *with* them, this will be entirely satisfactory. It may even be possible for both the teacher and the special director to play with the same group at different times.

Method.—The director must be clearly and consistently conscious of her *aim,* as being the development of the children themselves through natural, self-educative activity. After providing a fitting time and place, her first concern is to furnish the children with dramatic material suited to their ages. This may be done through story-telling and the use of pictures. If the children can be led to *see* a dramatic incident in a Bible picture, and then to play it, the play may be even more truly self-expression than if the story has merely been told to them.

It should be remembered that with the Beginners dramatic play is still normally individualistic. The children will not be interested in a dramatic game unless the part that each child is asked to play interests him for its own sake. But it is also true that they are ready to imper-

sonate anything, brute or human, animal or vegetable, even inanimate objects.

While it is a good idea to let the children choose their own parts, where time is unlimited, it is much wiser for the teacher to assign parts than to waste a considerable portion of the class-session in discussion of the matter. It should be done by *invitation,* however, not by dictation.

However short and simple the process may be, the director should bear in mind the general outline for the development of the dramatic personality. (See pages 81-88.) All that is necessary in the way of analysis may be covered while the children are taking their places for the game, and the teacher may assume, generally speaking, that dramatic imagination has been roused by the mere telling of the story, or suggesting of the "game." The slightest suggestion, in the case of an imaginative child, is often sufficient to establish "contact" with the dramatic environment, and from this point on the process should be automatic. (See the illustration of a five-year-old girl discovering the baby Moses, pages 44-45.)

The teacher just attempting this work for the first time may become discouraged because her whole group does not arrive at characterization in every "game." This is not to be expected, for two reasons: the little children have not developed the power of voluntary attention to any degree worth mentioning, and therefore one cannot count upon their *tiding over* a dull moment, while waiting for a laggard pupil to get ready, for example, by *holding* their attention to the situation through conscious choice. The other reason is that they have not yet acquired a group consciousness, as their "Junior" brothers and sisters have to a large extent. One should not expect a five-, or even a six-year-old child to abandon himself completely to a particular game just because the group has chosen it. There is no intention to minimize the training in the social instincts provided by the Kindergarten and the Beginners Department. The child may, it is true, be led to submit himself to the will of the majority, so far as his outward actions are concerned; but it is also true that his imagination may at the same time be occupied with an entirely different matter; and mere outward conformity alone will not result in "characterization." The teacher should remind herself continually that she is not attempting to achieve an effect, even for an imaginary audience; she is simply allowing the children to educate themselves through spontaneous play. Not every member of the group will gain the utmost benefit from each occasion. Indeed, there may be some who habitually fail to attain genuine characterization. Such habitual failure may suggest to the teacher an inquiry as to the child's health, a consultation with the

teachers in the day-school, or Kindergarten, and even, possibly, an intelligence-test, if such are being sanely administered in the place in question. It is likely, however, that a little special attention (of the right sort) from the director will prove efficacious in developing the child's powers of attention, clear perception, imagination, feeling, and expression. (In fact, it is claimed that educational dramatic work can accomplish for many backward or defective children things that other methods have failed to do; and it is to be expected that this claim will be substantiated by future experiments.)

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the mere suggestion of an audience is to be avoided. There are teachers who recognize this danger as regards "outside" observers, and yet make the mistake of turning a part of the group itself into an audience, asking certain children to "perform" for the others. It has even been suggested by supposed teachers of educational method that different children be asked to impersonate various characters doing certain things, as a sort of demonstration, for the group to watch, with the idea that each one who tries the impersonation may be able to improve upon the preceding player's way of doing it. Needless to say, such an idea is a direct importation from the schools of dramatic expression. One who has even as much knowledge of educational method as may be gleaned from the foregoing pages of this manual will understand that the children should not be invited to center their attention on the *manner* of their response to a given situation. The object of dramatic expression, as a factor in religious education, or, indeed, general education, is not to make the player conscious of his forms of expression but to give him opportunity for vicarious experience of life. Such work as that referred to above might have its place in a school for actors' children intended for a stage career, but surely the church is not the place to give such training.

Certain cases may occur which might seem to be exceptions to the preceding statements. Suppose the children have been shown a picture of a patriarchal Hebrew household in one of the black Bedouin tents still characteristic of the Arabian desert. Various domestic activities are being carried on, in the picture, among them the grinding of grain by two women at a hand-mill. The teacher suggests that the children "play house" in the desert fashion, and two little girls choose to work the mill. (The Beginners, or even Primary children, will be satisfied with an imaginary mill.) However, the two children have "perceived" the picture differently, or interpreted it differently, or else one of them has remembered it clearly while the other has forgotten. A dispute arises as to how the thing is done. The teacher intervenes. "Betty," she may

say, "let's be quiet a minute and let Dorothy show us how she thinks it works, and then *you* show how *you* think it works, and then I'll get the picture and we'll see which is right." The girls will do this with perfect freedom and lack of self-consciousness, because their attention is not directed to themselves but to the idea of the mill, and its workings, an object entirely outside themselves. It is not *their* response to the situation, or *their* forms of expression they are demonstrating, but the working of a machine, the handling of an implement.

This same incident may serve to illustrate the place which imitation may have in this work. When one child has hit upon the correct series of movements, there is no harm in allowing the other to get it by imitating the first; or, if necessary, the teacher may assist both to understand the picture by herself illustrating the motions. It will easily be seen that this is a very different matter from asking the child to imitate certain forms of expression which are normally the automatic result of a life-process involving emotional readjustment. The case of the mill involves training in perception, visual and motor imagination, and muscular coordination and control, but it does not, in itself, involve emotional readjustments, as we ordinarily understand the term. There is undoubtedly some change in the "feeling-tone" of the organism connected with the satisfaction of curiosity, and the pleasure of achieving a new form of activity. (To be sure, if the disagreement has reached the temperature of a quarrel before the teacher arrives, there may be emotional readjustments connected with the incident, but they are extraneous to the matter of the illustration.)

As to the personnel of the groups, boys and girls may play together or separately, whichever happens to be convenient; although *some* of the work should certainly be done with a mixed group. Girls playing by themselves will feel no inadequacy in their own impersonation of male parts, but to have boys impersonate girls or women is another matter. There will probably be no difficulty with the mixed group, with the possible exception of the last year of the Primary Department. Some boys of eight have begun to regard little girls as hardly to be taken seriously in the light of playmates. But there will be no very difficult problem here until later.

Values.—The values of educational dramatic work have been suggested or implied in many references to aims, materials, and methods, but it may be helpful to give a brief summary of this subject in connection with each group.

Different types of material will, to a certain extent, yield different values. The differences, however, are chiefly to be seen in the *incidental*

values. Since these are more or less obvious, and easily explained, they have been emphasized, somewhat to the neglect of the essential values. The incidental values, in fact, are so well known as hardly to need enumeration. It is now generally understood that children remember incidents or stories they have *played* longer than those which have been merely told or read to them, even with the accompaniment of pictures. This is perfectly true, but it has been stressed so much in recent years that many people suppose "educational dramatics" to be the use of dramatics as a pedagogical method—as a vehicle of instruction. It may be this and often is, but this idea by no means conveys the whole significance of the term "educational dramatics."

Other incidental values are as follows: it provides physical activity, socially motivated so far as it can be with children of this age, and abundant opportunity for teaching lessons of cooperation, self-control, and courtesy. The range of incidental values is not so wide as in the following period; and, moreover, it is probably less important that dramatic work should be a regular part of the curriculum of religious education at this age than later. The reason for this is that the dramatic instinct is still so strong in most children at this period that it does not *depend* on the encouragement which may be given it in any sort of school. The crisis in its development does not occur until the following period. Furthermore, the essential values of dramatic expression are the same, whether the children are playing in the school or the church, the home or the playground, and whatever the subjects of their impersonations. The values may differ greatly in degree, but not in kind.

This essential value is indicated in our working definition of the function of dramatic instinct: to assist the individual in adjusting himself to his spiritual environment. The child is, "instinctively," reaching out for vicarious experience of life. He does not know that this is what he wants, but it is nevertheless what the satisfaction of the instinct brings him. The idea that play is a natural self-educative activity is now so generally accepted that we are inclined to forget its comparative newness. It is not so many years ago that the real significance of the kitten's game of "make-believe" with a spool, evidently assigned to the rôle of a mouse, was first perceived. It is now understood that the kitten is being educated, by the play-instinct, to fulfill an honorable part in his mature life as a mouse-catcher. But there has not been, in general, a sufficiently clear distinction made between the kitten's play and that of the little girl with her dolls, for example. The kitten's game with the spool-mouse is assisting in his adjustment to his physical environment—preparing him to survive in the struggle for existence. (It is admitted, to

be sure, that the amazing beauty and perfect grace of a playful kitten's movements tempt one at times to feel that they must embody a sort of spiritual self-expression through the poetry of motion, but perhaps it is only the real lovers of cats who feel this.)

The child at play with her dolls, however, is unconsciously seeking, and finding, something more than a knowledge of the movements necessary in dressing, undressing, and bathing a baby and putting it to sleep. She is finding a vicarious experience of a new relationship, trying out a new personality, who has serious responsibilities and duties. She is, for the moment, a different person, in a new environment. The kitten, on the other hand, has assumed no "dramatic personality" for the purpose of his game, at least so far as the casual observer can judge. He does, indeed, assume different *moods,* pretending indifference for a moment, and then turning, with an incredible sidewise leap, as if to surprise the "mouse" in an effort to escape. (So far as the writer is aware, the play of animals has not been made the subject of exhaustive scientific research, from this viewpoint, and therefore one must avoid anything like positive generalizations.)

If this distinction were more clearly made, there would probably be a more rapid realization of the peculiar value of dramatic play as a factor in moral and religious education. We recognize that the instinct of curiosity leads a child to explore his physical environment and thereby to gain knowledge which helps in his ultimate adjustment to it. The dramatic instinct is the corresponding urge driving him to explore his *spiritual* environment: to find out what is going on in the worlds that are the other human souls about him. No one supposes that an individual can acquire a full knowledge of his physical environment without the use of his senses and the exercise of his faculties of response to their stimulation. Nor should we assume that he can gain a genuine understanding of his spiritual environment without the use of his imagination and emotions and the exercise of varying modes of reaction and response. This has been partly recognized, since Froebel, and much has been written about the importance of "training the emotions," in connection with moral education. But it is one thing to point out the close relationship between the emotions and the will (a very ancient writer did that in the words: "Out of the heart are the issues of life"), and quite another to provide the teacher with a definite, rational, systematized *method* of "training the emotions." For the latter one may search the pedagogical libraries in vain. It is somewhat amusing to note the confiding manner in which the psychologists and educators will turn this whole field of education over to the "mother." They readily instruct her in many other

particulars as to her child's development, but when they come to this troublesome question of the training of the emotions, they make some general pronouncements on the importance of the matter and conclude by intrusting the whole thing to the mother, probably adding a few poetic sentiments about her intuitive knowledge of her child's needs. (It may be remarked that when the scientific educators have a definite solution to offer for a problem, they are not so ready to put their faith in "feminine intuition.")

Fortunately, the creative process itself has evolved a method of dealing with this problem; and the chief significance of "educational dramatic work" is that it offers the educator a means of conserving this method and indefinitely extending the period in which it may function for the development of the individual and social life of humanity.

CHAPTER X

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

(Review pages 48-54 and 32-36)

AT the beginning of the Junior Department, the children are normally in the "story-play" period. With special culture, they should arrive at the "episodic" period before leaving the department.

Motive.—The principal motive, the mainspring of the dramatic activity, should still be the satisfaction of the instinct and the joy of spontaneous self-expression. However, the child's developing nature and broadening experience make possible an appeal to certain secondary motives which will reenforce the primary urge and help to keep the group united in a common purpose. One such secondary motive is curiosity; that is, conscious, intellectual curiosity, as distinguished from the general curiosity about life which, though unrecognized by the child himself, drives him to experiment with vicarious experiences. Beyond this the Junior child has normally a definite curiosity about ways of living different from his own. Which of us cannot recall an adventurous day on which we decided to "go camping," and erected a crude shelter in the garden or the wood-lot (if we were fortunate enough to spend summers at least in the country), to which we laboriously carried everything allowed us with which to set up housekeeping? We wanted to know what it felt like to live in a tent. Our grandfathers doubtless would have condemned this desire as "idle curiosity," and recommended some edifying reading for a child who had nothing better to do than to think of such foolishness. Now we organize societies to satisfy this sort of curiosity and utilize it for constructive ends of education, in regard to health, first-aid, woodcraft, etc., and the social instincts.

The child's curiosity can be directed to other objects, other ways of living also, which have a special relation to religious education. It is possible to arouse his curiosity as to how the people of the Bible lived at different times and in different countries, and how the people live in varied and far-distant mission fields to-day.

The satisfaction of this sort of curiosity involves another secondary motive—the constructive and creative impulse. The children can easily be interested in making various objects which they will need in their

experiments with life. Some children, with a strong impulse toward construction, will respond to this motive more readily even than to the actual dramatic play for its own sake. But the dramatic impulse functions in the end for them as well as for the others.

With few exceptions presentation to an audience should not be the *original* motive. The play should be entered into for its own sake, or for a closely allied motive, such as those mentioned above. However, it may be perfectly safe, especially in the last year of the department, when the children are passing into the episodic period, to introduce this motive, after a "story" or episode has already been played several times with satisfaction and enjoyment by the group. But even then care should be taken that the motive is not that of self-exhibition. It is hardly necessary to say that preaching against vanity will accomplish nothing. The thing to be done is to fill the child's mind with a motive not concerned with himself. For example, a third-year Junior class might be asked to play a story they have enjoyed, for the Primary Department, or for the general exercises in their own department on some special occasion. A group that has done this sort of thing once or twice might even be given the opportunity to entertain the children in an orphan asylum, the children's ward in a hospital, or some other group more or less dependent on others for amusement. In all these cases the altruistic motive should be put forward, but not so as to encourage self-righteousness.

Time and Place.—The simple story-play, done with no preparation beyond the telling of the story and a few minutes' discussion, may be carried on as a part of the regular class session, wherever a group has a room for its own use, or can be taken to a suitable place. Even the one-room Sunday school in the smallest rural church need not consider story-play as impossible, in pleasant weather. The writer has a vivid memory of a sunny May morning in northern Illinois, at a tiny crossroads church, when, two teachers being absent from the Junior Department, their classes were given to the visiting dramatic director to play with, and were taken out into the sunshine for a half hour. They played the story of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate by Peter, and the courageous answer of the apostles to the threats of the Sanhedrin (their lesson of the week before), and the director will not soon forget the ten-year-old Saint Peter as he stood straight and slim, his eager face lifted to the sunlight, and his young voice ringing out in those convincing words, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

There was about half a minute left at the close of the play in which to remind the children that the priests and scribes had been "amazed"

at the power of these ignorant fishermen, until they "took knowledge of the men, that they had been with Jesus." Probably no one who had seen the quiet thoughtfulness with which the children returned to their places would doubt that this "vicarious experience" had left a deeper impression than the usual type of review. The only pity was that every class did not have at least an occasional session of this sort. We are in danger, in our shaded and protected classrooms, of losing a certain outdoor quality in the great lives recorded in the Bible.

As the children advance into the episodic period, and it is necessary to give somewhat more time to the planning of the play, and possibly the collecting or making of simple properties and bits of costuming, a part of the work, at least, should be done outside of the regular session. The telling of the story, brief discussion of the characters, and rough blocking out of the action may well be a feature of the class work; the collection or preparation of equipment and the first attempts to play the episode might better be done on week-day afternoons; and later, when the episode has been worked into a more or less fixed form, and the children are familiar with it, it may well be played in a regular class (or department) session, by way of review. For example, a review of the story of David might have as one feature of it the playing of a five- or ten-minute episode from his early life.

Wherever Week-day Religious Instruction has become established opportunity can be found for dramatic expression outside the Sunday sessions. The Daily Vacation Bible School offers a splendid opportunity to make this work count for the utmost. Indeed, in many cases, well-directed story-play might prove the entering wedge to open the way for such a school, or even for the Week-day Religious Instruction plan in a community. An experiment was made recently in a rural community, where a staff of directors played with the children for two hours every morning, for a week, besides doing other types of dramatic work with older groups. The children (about twenty of them) came in from the outlying farms in pony-carts, riding farm-horses, and walking, and at the end of the week it was obvious that they would have been only too delighted to keep on coming for the rest of the summer, if a Daily Vacation Bible School could have been organized then and there.

Leadership.—The same general principles apply here as with the younger groups, except that a Junior group is probably a little readier to accept an adult *who knows how to play* as one of themselves, and consequently it is somewhat more practicable for a special director to lead them in this work. (It is admitted, however, that the experience of directors might vary on this point.)

Method.—A concrete illustration will suggest one way in which a Junior group may be led from story-play into episodic work, even the formal phase of it on occasion.

The director was spending a series of week-ends in a rural town, and invited some children (mostly of Junior age) to come and play with her every Saturday morning. The first Saturday was a warm spring morning, and the children gathered about the steps of the front piazza, some lying on the grass, while the director told, very briefly, the story of the hiding and finding of the infant Moses in the bulrushes. On being asked if they would like to play it, the children joyfully assented and in a twinkling were ready to begin. They were allowed to do it in their own way, the director taking very little part in the planning, except as one of the group, playing with them.

A significant point to be noted here is that the children, left to themselves, did not think in terms of presentation to an audience. The reeds which were to hide the ark were represented by some bushes on one side of the house; the home of Moses and Miriam in a different place altogether. It did not occur to them to "make a stage picture." Nor did they feel the need of costumes or elaborate properties. A doll in a market-basket played the part of Moses very acceptably.

The "play" was very short, very simple, very crude. After it was over, the director told the players that other children had played that same story, and asked if they would like to see some pictures showing the way a group of children in Chicago played it. They gathered about eagerly to look at the book she was holding (*Shorter Bible Plays*, by Rita Benton), and after they had enjoyed the pictures, she asked if they would like to hear how *those* children had played the story. They settled themselves to listen willingly, and the director read the short play to them. Immediately one of the group exclaimed, "Let's play it again!" The others agreed, and the second attempt showed a slight but definite modification as a result of the reading. One or two of the more eager were inclined to play the story a third time, but the director, fearing lest the others weary of it, suggested that they try another story and play that one again the next week.

The following Saturday some of the girls had ransacked their mothers' attics and produced a few suggestive bits of costuming. A piece of an old lace curtain served as a veil for the princess. One girl had volunteered to bring a life-size doll. The book was occasionally referred to.

After this the director mentioned that the class of "grown-ups" she was teaching at the church every Friday afternoon (a few of the Sunday-

school teachers, etc.) were interested to know what it was the children were playing, and she asked whether they would like to come after school on the following Friday and play the story for them. The children considered with gravity. One girl reported for her chum, "She says she'll do it, if there aren't too many people." On being assured that there would not be more than half a dozen in all probability, they agreed. But—what about costumes? They didn't have very much—. The director said she thought she could find a few things at her office in the city.

The next week she brought the absolutely necessary pieces, but the most lovely of the available costumes were still kept in reserve. This time the story was played in the church. It was still very informal, very imperfect from the standpoint of artistic effect; but the mothers and teachers watching sensed the fact that here was something genuine.

The next morning the director told the children that the class had been so much pleased with the story that it had been suggested that they play it for a meeting that was to be held in their church about two weeks later. (As a matter of fact, this meeting was a Rural Life Conference to which delegates were to come from the surrounding region, and a simple dramatic program for that occasion had been one of the director's objectives throughout. Some of the young people also were rehearsing a little sketch under her direction for the same evening. It was desired to demonstrate how dramatics might be made part of the life of the rural church with practically nothing in the way of equipment and very little room. But if she had explained all this to the children at the start and said, "Come, now, we will rehearse a play to present for the Conference," the result might have demonstrated various things, but not the truth it was desired to show. For the play would have been artificial, not a normal manifestation of the dramatic impulse at their age. As it was, the public presentation came about as a natural conclusion of a gradual process of development lasting some five or six weeks.)

The children agreed, after careful deliberation. Note that the director did not announce that they were to do it, but merely asked if they would like to do it, to please the people who would be there, suggesting also that it was thought there might be other children in near-by towns who would enjoy playing that way if their teachers only knew about it, and perhaps if the latter came and saw this little play, they would go home and try it in their own Sunday schools.

The girls became enthusiastic—especially when the director promised to bring even nicer costumes. It must be admitted that the boys were much inclined to fight shy of the whole proceeding. Nothing of exactly

that sort had been done there before, and they had a tendency at first to feel that it was beneath their dignity. However, enough boys were finally enlisted to fill the essential parts.

Now the children were advanced to a prompt-book. Those who had the most lines to speak copied out their parts and studied them, whereas those who had only one or two lines were simply prompted in rehearsal. The children with good memories shortly began to prompt the others. The next week there was a dress rehearsal and great was the delight over the pretty costumes.

On the evening of the production the children were wild with joy and excitement. After their play was over they were given places in the front seats to watch the other numbers on the program. When it was all over, the director went across to the parsonage, which had been converted into temporary dressing rooms. The children occupied the whole of the lower floor, and the noise was marvelous. One voice remains clear in memory. A boy of nine or ten, who had been persuaded with some difficulty, greeted her with flashing eyes and a ringing shout: "Say, I wish you'd do this often!"

The director was not long allowed to forget the pathos of our blunder in neglecting the dramatic instinct. In returning to the church, she met a member of her adult class, a Sunday-school teacher and mother of a lovely young girl, who had played with the children a few times. In a tone of wistful longing which the director cannot forget, she exclaimed: "Oh, if I had only known how to do this—how much I could have done for these children!" But then she added, with a new hope for the future, "But my *daughter* can get it!"

When a public presentation can be made to develop naturally from simple story-play in some such way as this, there is no objection to it. In the particular case described above it was desired to demonstrate for teachers, etc., the more informal type of play, and therefore a finished production was not attempted; but wherever a play is announced or advertised *as entertainment,* the children must be brought to some sense of responsibility to their audience. This, however, should be developed after they have entered into the dramatic situation, by way of informal play. After the children had played the story of Moses in the Bulrushes on two different sides of the house, it was suggested that all the scenes *might* be played in very nearly the same place. When it was decided to play the story for the adult class, the children played it in the church, and a "house" was constructed for the family of Moses in a corner of the platform, out of screens and chairs; the palace of Pharaoh was located at the back of the church, and the Nile flowed in front of the platform, so

that the principal scenes naturally took place at the front edge of the platform. It was not necessary to mention to the children that a good production demanded that they *should* be played there; it could be brought about incidentally. Once they were on the platform, it was quite simple to explain that the people who wanted to watch the story-play would like to see clearly and understand everything that happened, and that they could not do so if the children stood in front of one another or turned their backs to the people all the time.

Once the children are really interested in the dramatic situation, and living in it, the few necessary directions as regards "stage conventions" will not be likely to disturb the dramatic illusion very seriously. The idea of an audience should be entirely absent from the children's minds in the first place, and should not intrude thereafter more than is necessary to the accomplishment of a pleasing production.

It must not be thought that this is mere theory and has no practical bearing on the success or values of the work. The following case is typical: A little girl about nine years old, in another rural community, was given a speaking part in a play, which was directed according to educational method. She responded normally, and was perfectly happy in the work. After the production her mother came to the director in amazement and said that the child had always been so exceedingly shy that she could hardly be prevailed upon to take any part in the Sunday-school programs, and on one or two occasions when she had been practically forced to "speak a piece," she had broken down and burst into tears in the middle of it. The mother was utterly astonished to see this child playing a prominent part with perfect ease and evident enjoyment.

There was no magic about it. The whole secret was that the child's attention had been centered throughout on the story, the dramatic situation, and the *other person,* in the play, not on herself or the audience. She had been playing under several directors during the week, and probably none of them has forgotten the wistful affection with which she bade them farewell. Did she not sense vaguely that a new world of enjoyment and experience was being opened to her—a new means of "stretching the ego"? One director at least has been fairly haunted at times by the look in her eyes. One would like to be sure that the opening door had not been closed again, and that she had not once more been tortured by having to face an audience in a wholly artificial performance.

The typical arrangement of a Junior Department is in separate classes of boys and girls and in general it is probably wiser to keep to this grouping in the dramatic work. There is, of course, no objection to an occasional play in which both boys and girls take part, but the combina-

tion, besides presenting a much more difficult problem to the director, often interferes with the establishment of dramatic illusion; and consequently the essential values of impersonation are in danger of being missed. Another reason for the division is that the interests of the sexes are more clearly differentiated at this period than in the preceding ones, and a type of subject-matter particularly valuable for one group might be quite inappropriate for the other.

Values.—In addition to the essential values mentioned under the Primary Department the Juniors should, through their dramatic work, form the habit of choosing more carefully the objects of their *conscious attention* (in other words, choosing their *contacts*) rather than accepting them passively and uncritically. They should develop the habit of exercising their imagination not only in connection with things they see and hear but in connection with the thoughts and feelings of others; that is, they should develop *dramatic* imagination—the power of putting oneself in the other person's place.

Just here lies the chief significance of dramatic expression for moral education. We teach the Golden Rule as the basis of Christian morality. But the extent to which we can put the Golden Rule into practice is largely determined by the amount of dramatic imagination we possess, or at least by our habitual application of it to the situations in which we find ourselves. A remarkable experiment is being carried on in the Primary Department of a private school in an exclusive suburb of New York City.[1] Whenever a difficulty of social adjustment arises in the common life of the school, the situation is dramatized, informally, after a moment's discussion of the problem involved. For example, it was found that the children were failing to arrive at amicable adjustments as to the share each should have in the use of the swings in the playground. Various methods of solving the difficulty were suggested but, although the children seemed to be desirous of harmony among themselves, they did not succeed in achieving it.

Then the teachers went out to the swings with the children and said, "Now let us *play* that Arline is swinging, and Tess wants the swing, and *see* what happens." After one attempt, two other girls tried it, and then two more, etc. This dispassionate consideration of the situation, by the group, animated for the moment by a common interest and desire, stimulated the imagination of each child as to how the *other* girl felt in such a situation. Once they could successfully put themselves in

[1]Greenwich Academy, Greenwich, Connecticut. The department referred to is the Lower Primary Department, of which Miss Harriet M. Hodge is the director, assisted by Miss Helen L. Hodge.

the other person's place, there was no further difficulty about following the Golden Rule. The trouble about the swings was ended.

Our inheritance of the dogma of original sin and total depravity doubtless makes us too ready, even yet, to assume that the source of all failures in social adjustment among children is deliberate malice or unfeeling selfishness. Further experimentation with the dramatic method of moral education will almost certainly prove that a very large number of such failures, if not the majority of them, are due to a lack of dramatic imagination or of the habit of *applying* it to difficult situations.

In the same Primary Department, when a visitor is expected, the children are asked, "Now if *you* were this person coming to visit our department, what do you think you would like to have the pupils do? What could they do to make you feel welcome and happy?" Then they *play* the arrival of the visitor. One child is the guest, another goes to the door to admit and greet her, etc. Possibly several children take these parts, one after the other. The result is that when the visitor actually arrives, the children's imaginations are occupied with putting themselves in her place and trying to make her comfortable. This eliminates self-consciousness and awkward shyness and turns the whole department into an eager reception committee. Is it any wonder that visitors remark upon the manners of the children in this department?

The student can hardly fail to note the vital difference between this sort of individual demonstration and the kind referred to on page 105. In the latter case, the child's attention is centered on himself and the *manner* of his expression, and he is conscious that the attention of his "audience" is also centered there. In the case described above the attention of the whole class, including the players, is centered on some one *other* than themselves; and the motive is not self-exhibition, but the desire to meet successfully a situation in real life.

CHAPTER XI

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Intermediate Department

(Review pages 36-38 and 55-59)

This is distinctively the episodic period in the development of the dramatic instinct, and the pupils normally pass from the informal to the formal phase of the period during these years. Whereas formal dramatic work, with responsibility to a written text, should be the exceptional thing with Juniors, in the last year of the Intermediate Department, it should be, as a rule, the final stage of work on any dramatization. It must not be forgotten that this is a period of transition in many ways, and only careful experiment can show whether a certain group is ready for the formal phase of episodic work or not. A class that has had continuous work in story-play throughout the Junior Department may be quite willing to go on with informal episodic work through the first year, at least, of the Intermediate Department. On the other hand, a class that has had no such background is likely to regard that sort of "play" as childish. It will then depend largely on the skill and personality of the director whether they can be led into that form of expression which is still normal for them, or whether it will be necessary to *begin* with the formal dramatizations.

Motive.—Along with the passing from the informal to the formal phase of dramatic expression comes a subtle change in the motive of the "play." One way of describing it is to say that the *play* motive is replaced by the *art* motive. Another way might be to say that the essential dramatic impulse is reenforced by a *conscious* creative impulse. Where the child desires the "vicarious experience" of the things that happen to the other person, and the things he does, the youth desires also to create a character. Or, to put it in still other words, where the Junior wishes simply to play a story, the Intermediate wishes to *make* a *play*.

This does not mean that the director should expect to find this motive conscious and fully developed in every Intermediate group. It might be difficult in some cases to detect any evidence of it on one's first contact with a group. It does mean that this is the period when this motive may emerge, suddenly or gradually, and when it sometimes

emerges without any encouragement from teachers or parents. It also means, doubtless, that this motive is latent in very many individuals where it has not been suspected, either by themselves or others, and that it can be developed and given opportunity to satisfy itself, under educational guidance, so as to enrich and broaden the whole life.

An inevitable accompaniment of this change is the desire for an audience. It may not be that the actual performance before an audience is what the players chiefly desire; but they have an intuitive feeling that the only way to test the validity of their creation is to try the effect of it on others, not in the original group. This desire, as has been said before, can be satisfied very easily with a small amount of publicity. It is probably better for the players that their work should be appreciated by their immediate circle of acquaintances than that it should be widely advertised.

Even though the dramatic expression of Intermediates is partly motivated by the thought of an audience, it will be possible to develop certain episodes to the point where characterization is attained by at least a part of the group, without going on to make a finished production. For this kind of work, several secondary motives may be counted on. Corresponding to the Junior's curiosity about the physical aspects of different ways of living, we find a new curiosity about the ways in which adult men and women meet the situations of life. Also the Intermediate will recognize the value of experiment in his creative work. The altruistic motive should still be stressed in planning for any sort of public production.

Time and Place.—Planning of episodes, discussion of outlines, and reading of completed texts may suitably be a part of the class work. The actual playing, or rehearsing, in the case of formal episodes, would generally be done at other times: wherever and whenever it may be convenient for players and director. The suggestions given under the Junior Department apply here also.

Leadership.—Whoever the leader may be, whether the class teacher or a special dramatic director, certain qualifications are important.

First, it should be someone who understands the Educational Dramatic method, and the peculiar significance and value of dramatic expression at this age.

Second, it should be a person who understands young people of this age and is interested in them.

Third, it should be a student with an intense interest in the great characters of the Bible, and sufficient knowledge and wisdom to be a real guide to the players in their efforts to interpret these characters.

Let no one imagine that this is demanding the impossible. There are many young men and women in our churches, college graduates and others, who have the second and third qualifications mentioned, and, moreover, a sincere desire to serve, but who, for one reason or another, do not fit into the regular program of the Church School. Perhaps they do not care for formal teaching; perhaps the time of the session is not convenient for them; perhaps they simply are not needed. With even a small amount of instruction in the principles of Educational Dramatic method numbers of these unused leaders could be prepared to specialize in this particular phase of moral and religious education, and so double the impact of Christian teaching upon the boys and girls at a period when they are very apt to drift away from the Sunday school. Regular, well-directed dramatic work would hold many a boy and girl in early adolescence when the formal teaching of the Sunday school would fail to do so. And this is not wholly because of the "fun" connected with it. It satisfies a natural instinct and definitely helps the youth in the difficult problem of adjustment to life.

It is perhaps time for the church to begin seriously to consider providing the necessary training for leaders in this new field of religious education.

Method.—Two facts give warrant for a longer period of *preparation* for the playing of a story, or episode, than would be advisable in the Junior Department. The pupils' sense of dramatic effect and of form is developing, so that they naturally give more attention to the planning of a scene; and with judicious guidance, they may be led to take an interest in certain specific elements of dramatic effect, such as suspense, climax, contrast, surprise, and even, in some cases, the preparation of an audience for the dénouement. They will not be interested in the technical names for these effects, and should not be troubled with them; but a wise director can do much, through guiding the discussion of an outline for an episode, to cultivate a sense of form and appreciation of good work.

The second fact is that the interest in *character* which normally develops during this period opens up new possibilities in the way of discussion of the "persons of the play," their relations, their struggles, temptations, defeats, and victories, and the probable results of all these things in their lives after the period covered by the episode in question. Some illustrations of this kind of discussion will be found in the passages from Part II referred to at the beginning of this section. (Intermediate Department.)

A part of this discussion may take place in class, when the play-

ing of the episode is first proposed. If the playing is to be informal, parts might be chosen, or assigned, at this time, and each member asked to think over the character he is to represent, before the first attempt to play the scene. This may well take place on a week-day afternoon or evening. There will probably be opportunity to try it over several times, but the players should not be allowed to tire of it.

At some point during this Intermediate period the desire for a written text will arise normally in almost all cases. If the suggestion comes from the group, so much the better, but if the director feels that the class is ready for this step and still no one suggests it, there is no harm in proposing, after they have played an episode several times, that they should write it down. They may respond that they do not know how. The director should then show them some printed plays and explain carefully what is meant by "a speech," "stage directions," etc. It may be advisable to take some other episode well known to the group and work out a synopsis for it with them, so that they will understand how to go about it. Then ask each one (or those who wish to try) to make such a synopsis for the episode in question and bring it to class on the following Sunday. The teacher (or director, if they are not the same person) will then look over these outlines and probably read several, if not all, to the class, asking them to vote as to which is the best. It may be decided to combine the good points of several outlines into one. This the director or one of the pupils may arrange, and copies may be placed in the hands of each member who is willing to try the actual writing of dialogue.

The writing will probably be done during the week, between class sessions. If the director can hold "office hours" at some time, when he, or she, will be available for personal consultation by the pupils, so much the better. The first drafts may need rewriting, after criticism. The same process of voting, and even of combination, may then proceed, until the scene is finally accepted by the class and director as ready for rehearsal.

Then a prompter should be appointed, copies of the text made for all, and parts assigned. The general procedure in assigning parts has already been dealt with. In case the class has twice the number of pupils called for in the episode, a double cast may be formed, the two groups taking turns in rehearsing. This procedure utilizes the power of suggestion without actually "setting copy" for the players, and is sometimes very helpful in stimulating the dramatic imagination of those in whom it is less developed.

A cast reading should then be held, in which each player reads his

own part, and there may be further discussion of the characters, etc. Also each player should mark his entrance cues in his own copy.

After this reading the players should be asked to memorize their lines before the next rehearsal.

In directing rehearsals the general principles of educational method should, of course, be followed. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, these will be taken up more fully under the Young People's Department, but they apply equally to the work in the other departments. Each period, however, has its own special problems and the chief of these in the Intermediate Department is doubtless that it is distinctly a period of transition, and consequently great care is needed that the development of the dramatic instinct be not checked or perverted. If the players are hurried into the period of the formal play, involving large public productions (which normally comes several years later), the results are apt to be bad in the majority of cases. Those who are "self-conscious" and ill at ease on a platform will be discouraged and will conclude that they are "too old for that sort of thing," or else that they can never hope to attain sufficient assurance to take part in plays. In this way some of the most thoughtful boys and girls who, with wise guidance, might be greatly benefited throughout adolescence by dramatic expression, drop out of the circle of those who naturally "take part," and their dramatic instinct is thwarted in its development. On the other hand, wrong methods of "coaching" may easily pervert the dramatic instinct of the more assertive into a fondness for self-exhibition and love of publicity.

The method that has been outlined above will avoid these dangers because, first, the "play" grows naturally out of the class work; second, a public production is not the objective and, in many cases, does not occur; and, third, the work is regarded throughout as a creative effort of the *group* as a unit. This point of view should be retained even after copies of the text have been made and lines memorized. If a player happens upon a bit of phrasing that seems to the group better than that set down in the text, they should be free to substitute it for the original form. In fact, the players should not be oppressed by a slavery to the written word.

It will be found wise to do most of the dramatic work in this period with separate groups of boys and girls. This is not intended as favoring the segregation of the sexes for educational work in general; and there will be occasions when they should unite for dramatics. But it is difficult to achieve the *essential* values of dramatic expression with a mixed group at this age, because the new conscious attitudes developing toward

the opposite sex (whether of attraction, repulsion, or disdain) tend to interfere with that complete absorption in the dramatic situation which is necessary to genuine characterization.

Values.—One of the most distinctive values of dramatic work for moral and religious education during this period is the opportunity it affords for *impersonal* discussion of moral issues. The question of what a person ought to do in a given situation is normally interesting to an Intermediate; but his response is greatly limited if he suspects a personal motive in the discussion on the teacher's part. In other words, he does not take kindly to "preaching." (And there are adults, it may be remarked, not without sympathy for this attitude.) Now, it is a fact that no other method eliminates the personal element from the discussion of an ethical problem so surely as the dramatic one. Partly because of this very fact the pupil is likely to make clearer personal application of the general principles brought out in discussion and rehearsal than he can do if these same principles are presented to him in the way of direct teaching. In the latter case he is more or less embarrassed by the consciousness that the teacher *intends* a personal application. Indeed, a sensitive boy or girl may feel as if the whole class is mentally applying the lesson to his particular case. This sort of consciousness makes clear thinking practically impossible, and is apt to cause resentment, and even rebellion against the whole system of religious education.

Senior Department

(Review pages 38-40 and 59-64)

We are still dealing, in the Senior Department, with a period of transition, during which the pupil should pass normally from the episodic stage in the development of the dramatic instinct to that characterized by the formal play. The logical dramatic form for this period appears to be the series of episodes connected by a common theme, and therefore it has been classified as the *pageant period.*

Motive.—By this time (about fifteen years of age) the young people begin to feel it necessary to have some tangible motive for dramatic play, beyond the satisfaction of the instinct. That is one reason why they often imitate their elders by attempting the production of long and difficult plays, when their own innate desire for dramatic expression would normally be satisfied by a much simpler form. They feel that the kind of play which they enjoyed as Juniors and Intermediates is childish. And in this they are right; they are indeed ready for something more highly developed than this. In most cases, however, they do not under-

stand what it is that they want, and do not know how to satisfy the urge of the dramatic instinct except by the giving of formal plays before an audience.

There are new secondary motives capable of development at this time which may be made to reenforce the natural desire for dramatic play and at the same time provide an objective not directly related to this desire. One of these secondary motives is the interest in sharing information and ideas and in convincing others of the truth of one's own beliefs. Numerous activities characteristic of the high school testify to the prevalence and strength of this interest. The debating clubs offer the most striking example, but literary societies, Current Events clubs, and other organizations offer abundant opportunity to develop the powers of logical thinking, convincing statement, and effective delivery. Many high-school pupils are eager for such development. A class in the Church School that has arrived at a definite idea about some great biblical character may become interested in presenting this idea in a dramatic form to the other classes, or even to the church as a whole. In doing this they will naturally be setting forth an ideal of a certain type of personality. Suppose a class of boys averaging sixteen years of age are approaching the end of a course on the life of Paul. The teacher might say to them, "Was Paul the kind of man who would succeed as a leader of men today?"

As the discussion brings out one after another of the great qualities of leadership, the teacher will ask the pupil who mentions any one of these qualities to illustrate from some incident in the life of the apostle. When several have been recalled, he might say: "Boys, you have mentioned a very interesting series of incidents. If all young people had a clear picture in their minds of Paul as he went about his work, it seems to me they would understand better what makes a leader."

The class will probably give assent to this in some way, and then the teacher may continue: "What do you say if we *show* them? If we could put on a number of scenes of the sort you've just outlined, we could make every person in this school see Paul the way *you* see him." (*Note*:—The procedure from this point will be outlined under "Method.")

At about this period the young people are likely to think of putting on a play to raise money either for class or club expenses or for some benevolent object. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong in this, it is doubtless best, in most cases, to discourage it, or at least to stress some other motive in such a way that it becomes dominant. The group should be led to feel that if entertainment is offered to the public at a price, it

must be very good indeed, and that they can hardly hope to be successful in this without some experience and a great deal of effort.

There are many ways in which altruistic motives may find expression. A play may be given for an Old People's Home, or a Soldiers' Hospital. There is one case at least where groups of young people are occasionally taken to a Navy prison to present plays. This naturally cannot be done without permission from government authorities.

A Sunday-school class is sometimes asked to furnish a program for a Missionary Society. For this the pageant suggested above, on the first great missionary, would be not inappropriate.

Time and Place.—The same general division of the work as was outlined under the Intermediate Department should be followed here, but there will naturally be a larger amount of time spent outside the regular class sessions, in the preparation of material and rehearsals. In many cases it will be found practicable for the class to spend a part of Sunday afternoon in this way; and this may sometimes offer the solution of a troublesome problem.

Leadership.—The preparation of pageant material, if it is to grow naturally out of the class work, should be guided by the regular teacher if possible. A busy teacher may say, "This is all very well, but it would take much more time than I ordinarily give to the work." This is undeniable, and the answer is that not all Sunday-school teachers could find the time for it. But it is also true that many who would feel at first thought that they had not the time might find it if they once discovered the joy and solid satisfaction to be got out of such work as this. There is doubtless many a teacher working doggedly against a wall of reticence and apparent indifference, and struggling with discouragement, who could, by this approach, establish a wholly new and wonderfully close relationship between himself and his class, and find, in his enlarged opportunity to help them an unexpected joy. It is safe to say that no one can be sure, without trying, that he has not the ability to lead a group of young people in this type of work, and the possibilities it offers in the way of joyous and satisfying service make the experiment well worth while.

Where formal plays are undertaken a special director may take charge, if the teacher is not prepared to do so. As in all other departments, it is most important that the director should understand educational method and its application in the particular period in question.

Method.—The production of formal plays in this period does not differ essentially from the work in the Young People's Department and will be treated under that section.

The distinctive feature in this department is the preparation of pageants by the group, and therefore this will be considered in some detail. Let us return to the point where the teacher has just suggested to a class of Senior boys that they arrange a series of episodes on the life of Paul, in order to set forth their conception of him as the great leader. A class unused to this kind of work will doubtless hesitate, saying that they do not know how. The teacher should then encourage them by promising assistance, and leading them to construct an outline for a simple pageant, then and there, in a few minutes' discussion.

Then, when they have begun to get an idea of the procedure, he may suggest that each one prepare an outline for such a pageant and bring it to class the following Sunday.

The afternoon of the same Sunday on which the outlines are submitted might find the group gathered informally about the teacher, for discussion of the pageant plan. As the different lists of incidents are read the teacher will so guide the talk that the group may arrive at a definite idea of a *theme* for the pageant. Suppose the class decides that the underlying thought they wish to bring out is this: that Paul's sublime courage had much to do with his power of leadership. It will not then be difficult to select, from the many incidents suggested, those which show the effect of his courage upon other people.

While a pageant does not have a plot, it should give a certain effect of climax by making the last episode the strongest, if possible. In this case, the last scene presented would probably be Paul's defense before Agrippa (although if the storm at sea were to be included, it would, of course, follow this).

When a list of subjects has been finally decided upon (the number may be anywhere from four to ten), let each member of the class choose the one he would like to write. If several choose the same one, there is no objection; only the teacher must see that the most important scenes are taken by someone. He should then give a few simple instructions about the form of dramatic writing, possibly showing one or two printed plays.

The first drafts of the various episodes should be brought in on the following Sunday; and if the teacher can be prepared for a discussion of them that same afternoon, it will be a good thing. It is likely, however, that he may need more time to consider the papers, and therefore a week-day evening might be fixed for this work. In some cases individual discussions of the different papers with the writers will prove more satisfactory than a general meeting of the class. If the teacher is sure that the group discussion can be held without undue sensitiveness to

criticism, it will probably have greater value, for one sees what another does not; moreover, the pupils are more inclined to recognize the completed product as the creation of the *group* if the work is done in this way. It is hardly necessary to call attention to the opportunity afforded by these discussions to deepen the impression already made upon the pupils' minds by the character of the great apostle.

When the final drafts are ready, another meeting should be held at which the class should vote on the episodes to be included in the pageant. It is fairly safe to trust the judgment of the majority, provided the group is large enough. In a group of two or three the result of a vote will not always express the unbiased opinions of the voters, since one or two may defer to another's judgment out of politeness or lack of self-confidence. In any case, if the class prefers to have the teacher make the final selection, there is no harm in this.

Much of the foundation work for rehearsal has already been done in connection with the preparation of the material, and therefore the teacher may proceed at once to the assignment of parts. The ordinary "try-out" should not be used, but the director (or teacher) may suggest that several members be assigned the rôle of Paul tentatively, and during the readings and rehearsals take the part in turn, as he may call upon them. If it is later decided to have a public production of the pageant, it will probably be safe to let the class vote as to which "Paul" shall play the part.

When copies of one episode have been prepared, a cast reading should be held; and the subsequent procedure with any given episode will be much like that described for the formal play, under the Young People's Department.

The preparation of material of this sort will generally be done by separate groups of boys and girls, since they are in separate classes as a rule. But a new problem arises when it comes to the presentation of a pageant so prepared. While there might be one or two episodes in such a series that would require only boys or only girls as players, it is extremely unlikely that the whole pageant could be so written as to require only one sex. If a class of boys has written the pageant, a girls' class may be invited to help produce it, and vice versa. For any sort of public production, the players, whether girls or boys, should not attempt to impersonate the opposite sex. It is true that this is continually done in college dramatic clubs, and frequently by other amateur groups, but there is a very important distinction between this and the type of dramatic work of which we are speaking. In the case of the college plays referred to, both players and audience are interested in the effort mainly as an imitation of the actor's art. They are watching for evidence of dramatic

talent, hoping to discover future stars. The audience is there to see what the players can do and to be amused. The intrinsic absurdity of a boy's impersonation of Lydia Languish or a girl's interpretation of the swaggering Petruchio only adds to their amusement and, if it does tend to weaken the dramatic illusion, they are not disappointed, for they have not come with the expectation of being carried out of themselves or deeply stirred emotionally. Their interest is of an intellectual nature.

On the other hand, the main objective in presenting a religious play or pageant to an audience is to create a genuine emotional response and so touch the hidden springs of action. This emotional response comes only when dramatic illusion is established. If, then, we destroy the possibility of dramatic illusion at the start, by assigning a girl to the part of Paul, or a boy to the rôle of Dorcas, we have foiled our chief intent before beginning.

Where a special dramatic director is at work in the school, two classes, one of girls, the other of boys, might unite for the whole process, both the preparation of the pageant and its presentation. (One of the teachers may, of course, be the director in this case also.) Where formal plays are being used the same principle holds good.

Values.—The special value of the method of pageant preparation described above is that it causes the young people to give serious and interested attention, for a considerable period of time, to the things that enter into the making of a great character. The director will show them that in order to make the pageant a unit, and give it a clear and powerful message, each writer must have in mind as he writes his episode the bearing of past events in the hero's life on his decision in this critical moment, and also the consequences of this action in his after life. So, as they study and discuss and write the scenes, they actually see the development of character in the life-history of a great man, or woman.

This, though the pupils may not know it themselves, is a perfectly normal interest at this age; and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a method which would utilize it more fully for the ends of moral and religious education than this one of pageant-building.

In the act of impersonation itself, when properly guided, we discover values of great importance to the adolescent boy and girl. Youth at sixteen begins to be conscious, sometimes with tragic keenness, of the limitations imposed by environment, by early training, or lack of it, by financial circumstances, perhaps even by heredity. The youth feels at times that the only chance to become the man he longs to be is to escape from these limitations. In Colonial times he might have run away to sea; later, he would have followed Boone to Kentucky, or, still later,

joined the gold rush to California. In our complex civilization to-day the city youth, at least, needs not to go so far. Within a mile or so of his own home he can often find a totally different milieu, where restraint of any sort is considered "puritanical," and he will be allowed freedom to express his "individuality."

His sister, in the old days, would probably have accepted the first offer of marriage made her, as a way of escape. Now she goes into business, or goes away to school, or, a little later possibly, takes a studio in some artists' colony. If none of these avenues of escape is open to her, she may conclude that there is no use in trying to be the person she has dreamed of being; that she may as well be satisfied to be "like the rest." The danger in this is twofold: a deliberate choice of the lesser good will almost certainly mean deterioration; and moreover, an habitual attitude of contempt toward her associates prevents her from entering with real sympathy into the inner lives of those about her. Therefore she fails to see the qualities of nobility worthy of her emulation, and inevitably loses the sense of reverence for personality, which is probably the root of both morality and aspirational religion. Even where this appreciation is not lost it is often seriously blunted.

In such a girl the vicarious experience of impersonation may reawaken this sense of reverence, even of hero-worship; and, moreover, it may reveal to her capacities and powers lying dormant in her own nature, which she had not known existed. If she can be a gracious lady in the play, why not in real life? If, in the play, she can be a tower of strength to others, why continue to be a weakling in everyday surroundings? Let it be noted that no other educational method can accomplish just this. And the effect is not confined to the playing of attractive parts; suppose she is given the rôle of a passionate, revengeful fury. If she really achieves characterization, she will probably reflect with some astonishment: "*Are* there such things in me? How many other secrets lie hidden in my nature? Is it possible that I could be an altogether different sort of person from the one I am every day? It might be worth trying, to find out if I could be different—more like the person I really want to be."

In other words, the value lies not simply in the nature of the part impersonated, but in the act of impersonation itself (where characterization is achieved), in that it broadens one's conception of the potentialities of life.

CHAPTER XII

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Young People's Department

(Review pages 40 and 65-70)

We now have young people of college age to deal with, and we may assume that the dramatic instinct has developed to the stage when the formal play is its natural manifestation. Moreover, an inclination to attempt the *writing* of plays appears rather frequently, in these times when America is being remarked upon as a country where everyone writes plays. If a class is composed of college or university students, we take for granted a rapidly broadening range of interests, and developing powers of expression. It would be wise for the teacher in the Church School to remember that these developments are by no means confined to students by profession; that the young man whose only regular reading consists of the newspaper and perhaps a weekly review, taken while hanging to a strap in the subway or the "L," is very possibly doing some thinking as original as that of his friend who went on to college. This young girl who went into a business office on leaving high school may be capable of keener enjoyment of Sir James Barrie's plays than many a college girl. Capacities that are developed rapidly under the stimulus of the university environment may be latent in many of the young people in our Church Schools, even though unsuspected by themselves. One of the chief joys to be found in directing dramatic work is afforded by the opportunity to help waken these young people to possibilities of enjoyment and of service which they may have thought beyond their reach.

Motive.—In addition to the motives mentioned under the Senior Department, we may now find, in many cases, the conscious motive of self-development. If the young people in question have been accustomed to dramatic work under educational guidance, they will realize its value in the development and broadening of their own personalities, and will be glad to devote a considerable amount of time to it, even though a public performance be only an occasional incident in the process.

Moreover, we shall find, among the more sophisticated groups, a conscious (very conscious—one might almost say frenzied) desire for self-expression. This occasionally shows itself in a wish to attempt the inter-

pretation of highly emotional or tragic parts such as are not particularly appropriate for amateur players. This motive needs careful guidance and, at times, checking. The director should avoid the emergence of the "star" idea. No player should be allowed to acquire the conviction that he, or she, is the only one in the group capable of playing an important part.

While all these motives are of value in their place, unquestionably the highest motive for the presentation of religious drama by young people (or older ones) is the genuine desire to make spiritual truth clearer and more vivid to the spectators. In the experience of the writer it has proved true again and again that a player fired by this motive will give a truer characterization, a more convincing performance, than one who has better natural qualifications but whose motives are altogether on a lower plane.

It is to be feared that the commercial motive has been far too prominent in the presentation of church plays. One reason for this is doubtless that many leaders, still under the influence of the Puritan attitude, feel that they should assign a tangible "good cause" as a justification, a sanction for what seems to them a concession or a compromise with the "world." This state of mind is a natural result of the long centuries of divorce between the drama and the church, but it can be nothing more than a transition, and the sooner the transition is accomplished the better for the cause of moral, social, and religious education which both the drama and the church originally served. It may be fairly urged that if dramatics were to be regarded as a concession to something predominantly evil or dangerous, or even questionable in itself, it would be the business of the church not to seek justification and excuse for it, but to condemn it with no uncertain voice.

The charging of admission to cover the expense of a production, to limit the size of the audience, or even to raise money for some worthy cause, does not vitiate the value of a dramatic presentation; but whenever the raising of money is placed first as an objective the essential values of the work are naturally thrown into the background and thus the right perspective is lost. The reason why it has so often been a prime objective is undoubtedly that the essential values have not yet been generally recognized.

Time and Place.—Very little, if any, of the actual work connected with the production of a formal play would be done in the regular class session in this department. But in certain cases the class study itself would be laying foundations for the work on the play. (See, under "Method," page 134.)

Where the preparation of pageant-material by a group is carried on into the Young People's Department, the same procedure would be followed as in the Senior Department. (See pages 127-129.)

The Sunday afternoon discussion group will help greatly in the solution of the problem of finding time in the busy lives of modern young people for the beneficent activity of the dramatic instinct.

The subject of a suitable place for this work will be dealt with more fully under the head of "Method."

Leadership.—The director of dramatic work with young people of this age should be mature. The attribute of maturity in this connection is not so much a matter of years as of certain qualities of mind and personality. Breadth of sympathy, respect for individuality, mental poise, and keen dramatic imagination are all important. Enthusiasm, and joy in the work for its own sake are probably essential to success. If the dramatic instinct is to fulfill its primary function at this age, it is important that the work should be guided by someone who understands the principles of Educational Dramatic method. A knowledge of the art of creating a "stage picture"; of the principles of rhythm, balance, contrast, etc.; of the actor's "vocabulary of expression"; of diction—all this is helpful but by no means sufficient; and, in fact, for the ends of religious education, a director whose knowledge of these matters is intuitive rather than academic may do good work if he has a working knowledge of educational method, plus the qualities of personality mentioned above. A "coach" who possesses the technical knowledge referred to, but does not understand educational method, may be using his players as if they were puppets, to express *his own* imagination; the educational director has a far more subtle, but more fascinating task: to awaken and fire the dramatic imagination of his players, and guide them in *their own* self-expression. In other words, the material of his art is the most marvelous ever given to an artist; the material on which the Great Artist is still at work —the very substance of the human mind and heart.

Method.—Since the formal play is the typical form for this period, the treatment of method in this section will be from that standpoint, and will be somewhat fuller than in the other sections. The general principles stated here apply to the work of all departments although the details of procedure differ. Consequently it is recommended that even those students whose chief interest lies in the Junior or Primary Department should give careful attention to the following pages.

The actual training, or directing, of the players may for convenience be divided into three periods, or phases, which, to be sure, may sometimes overlap in practice, but should nevertheless be clearly differentiated

in the director's mind: (1) Laying the Foundations, (2) Developing Expression, and (3) Finishing.

It is probable that the most effective productions are built up against a background of special reading or classroom study of the general subject matter with which the play deals; study that has been a valid intellectual and emotional experience to the students. For example, if the members of a class that has been studying the social teachings of Jesus should follow up the course with a production of *The Rich Young Man,* or a class in Comparative Religions should undertake *The Seeker,* or a class in the Life of Christ should give "The Seeing Heart," or some other one of the plays in *Friends of Jesus,*[1] there would in each case be a general background of common knowledge, interest, and recent emotional experience which would furnish for the director a broad foundation on which to build, *with his players,* the superstructure of a convincing presentation. It is clear, however, that many a director must attempt the production of a religious drama without this assurance of a common background in the minds of his cast. In either case the procedure in the actual directing of the play should be much the same. Where such preparation is lacking, a greater responsibility devolves upon the director for the building up of the necessary background.

1. *Laying the Foundations.* The first general principle to be set down with regard to laying foundations is that there should be a genuine understanding of the play as a whole by the members of the cast before they can be expected to interpret the individual parts. Successful directors differ somewhat as to the details of the method by which this understanding is brought about, and probably no absolute rules can be laid down. It is often helpful, however, to one who has not a tried and proven method of his own, to be given an outline of procedure which he can at least use as the basis of experimentation. An outline of the method evolved by Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry and used with the Educational Players' Association of New York City, offers, in the opinion of the writer, the safest guide for the director.

This method is based upon the theory, tested through years of observation and experiment, that the first approach to any dramatic situation to be played is normally an intellectual process, namely, analysis. It is obvious that the activities of the human spirit cannot be pigeon-holed and docketed and made to keep their place for the convenience of theorists, or directors. The intellectual and the emotional doubtless mingle with somewhat more ease than oil and water in most of us, and

[1]All of the plays mentioned in the above paragraph are published by The Abingdon Press.

there are those who do very little thinking unrelated to their feelings. But we may perhaps go so far as to say that the deepest emotional experience of a given dramatic situation must follow a definite intellectual apprehension of its significance. By what steps will the director best insure this apprehension on the part of his players? The method referred to answers this question as follows:

First, the story of the play should be told, briefly, to the cast, or class, about to commence work on it.

This should be followed, if the piece is not too long, by a complete reading of the play to the group—not a dramatic impersonation of the characters but a simple reading, without comment. If the play is a very long one and time is limited, the reading may be a cutting, with necessary explanations. It is important, in any case, that from this point on every player should have access to the whole play and not merely to his own lines and cues.

The next step is a reading of the play by the group with parts unassigned, each person reading the speeches that fall to him in turn. By this means the players are forced to exercise their dramatic imagination, to some extent at least, on the characters and situations presented in the play, and at the close of this reading they should be ready to enter into an intelligent and profitable discussion of the personalities involved. It goes without saying that the director needs careful preparation for his work in order to guide this discussion into channels which will lead to that understanding of the play by all the players which is his immediate objective. His own preliminary study should cover such matters as the mental, emotional, and social background of the characters at the time of their appearance in the play, the relation of this little segment of their lives to the whole, the underlying motives for their attitudes and deeds, the universal truths exemplified in their experiences, etc.

When such discussion has established a common understanding of the general theme, characters, and situations of the play, parts should be assigned, in most cases tentatively at first, especially if the director is working with persons heretofore unknown to him. In this important step the director should keep in mind his two principal objectives: the value to the player, and the effect on the audience. If two players are apparently equally capable of interpreting a certain part with convincing effect, then let the part go to the one who is likely to be the more benefited spiritually through the playing of it.

Now, a cast reading of the play will afford opportunity for more detailed and intimate discussion of the characters. From the very beginning of this period of work the director should insist that the players commence

the actual impersonation of their rôles. In discussion of motives, etc., he will use the *second* person of the pronoun, saying to a player, "Why did you do that?" instead of referring to the character in the third person, as is done in the earlier discussion. By this time also the players should be ready to arrive at some conclusions as to the general appearance, bearing, manner, and habits of speech of the persons of the play.

The dramatic imagination of the players should now be thoroughly awake, and the dramatic instinct roused and urgent. They will probably be impatient to begin rehearsing. There are, however, still a few matters to be cleared up before they are prepared to attempt a full interpretation of the parts. There are entrance cues to be determined and noted in the players' books (as well as in the prompter's book), fine points of pronunciation and reading to be settled, groupings in important scenes to be arranged, and certain necessary moves to be fixed upon, with the exact time of their occurrence. One frequent misunderstanding with regard to "educational dramatics" appears to be that it is a *laissez-faire* method in which nobody knows until the actual production (and the director least of all) just what any one of the players is likely to do or when he may be expected to do it. Suffice it to say that this method aims at production with as high standards of smoothness and finish in the general running of the play as are attainable by the group involved. This error has doubtless arisen through a confusion of the term "educational dramatics" with "story-play," which is merely one phase of educational dramatics and should not be confounded with the method as a whole.

The last step in laying foundations for rehearsal consists of a reading of the play with the players on their feet and in position on the stage. This is sometimes called a "walking rehearsal." The object is to familiarize them with the positions, groupings, and necessary moves determined upon, in order that, as they begin to memorize their lines, they may be able clearly to imagine themselves in relation to other characters in the scene. Thus, when they come to actual rehearsal, they will be more at ease in the situation of the play, and hence freer to enter with self-abandon into the emotional experience of it which alone will carry conviction to their audience, or result in genuine development for themselves. This period also gives opportunity to test the entrance cues, etc., and it frequently proves necessary to alter slightly certain decisions that have been made. In the case of a long play it is sometimes possible to shorten this step by omitting the reading of passages of dialogue which do not call for *essential moves* on the part of the speakers; but the period as a whole should never be omitted. Neglect of it will prove to be a short-cut which saves no time in the long run and may do irreparable harm.

At the close of this period the director should announce that at the next session a certain part of the play (for example, the first scene, if not too long) will be rehearsed *without books.* The prompter will be on duty, and it is assumed that considerable prompting will be needed, but whether the players have finished the memorizing or not, they will not be allowed to go upon the stage carrying their books *in that particular scene.* (It is true that there may have to be occasional exceptions to this rule, but the cast should understand that these are made only for good reason.) The players should be sent away with the consciousness that they are now about to begin the most interesting and enjoyable phase of the work on the play, and with a pleasurable anticipation of the next step.

CHAPTER XIII

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT (Continued)

2. *Developing Expression.* When it comes to the rehearsal without books, the value of care and thoroughness in the foundation work will be evident. When a director is faced, at this stage of the process, with a cast of players who have simply memorized their own lines and cues, scanning the rest of the play hastily, to get the most obvious connections, who have given no serious study to the characters they are to represent or the general background of the play, and who have had no opportunity to test entrance cues, groupings, and essential moves, then, indeed, the task appears almost hopeless. On the other hand, a director who has conscientiously followed the method up to this point must not imagine that his work is over and that the rest can safely be left to the players themselves. Developing spontaneous expression does not mean leaving the player without help or guidance in the creation of his part.

The first necessity for this work is quiet; not simply lack of noise, but an atmosphere of calm, and of attention to a common interest. A group accustomed to the individualistic point of view sometimes has the idea that only the person to whom the director may be speaking at the moment is expected to give attention to the point under discussion. In beginning work with a new group, therefore, it is best to explain briefly but distinctly that, when the whole group is requested to be present in rehearsal, it is because the work to be done concerns them all; and that they are requested to leave the room for any necessary conversation unrelated to the matter in hand. Make clear that this is not intended as sarcasm, or as a threat of punishment, but merely as one of the conditions of the game, so to speak. It should be understood that it is in order for members of the cast who have long waits, if they become tired, to withdraw from the rehearsal room for a short period of relaxation or refreshment now and then; but it must also be understood that the rehearsal room itself is not the place for unnecessary conversation, confusion, or even napping, but a place for work. Naturally, when one is working with a group who have an enthusiastic interest in dramatic expression, there is little difficulty about establishing this attitude. But let the director not forget that sometimes the group which so tries his

patience by wandering attention, indifference, and superficiality, is the very group that is in especial need of the development afforded by this work. One of the most obvious needs of such a group is to develop the power of sustained voluntary attention. Therefore let it be perfectly clear from the first rehearsal that the rule calling for quiet in the rehearsal room is not merely theoretical but is to be maintained. After one or two couples have been courteously requested to finish their tête-à-tête outside the room, the idea will begin to penetrate the group.

This strictness of rehearsal discipline is balanced by the fact that the director will endeavor so to plan the work that no player will be kept waiting through a whole evening with nothing to do. Circumstances will occasionally make this unavoidable but it should not be a part of the plan. If a player appears in the first act of a long play, and not again until the third, he will be required to come to the rehearsal of the first act, but when the whole evening is to be spent upon the second act, he will be told that he is welcome to watch, if he likes, but it is not required. An enthusiastic player will prefer to come, and will certainly get greater value from the play than the one who comes only when he is to have some part; but it does not create enthusiasm to attempt to force people to take something of which they do not see the value.

Moreover, if there is a group which comes on in one or more scenes, but without speaking parts (commonly known as "supers"), they should not be asked to attend every rehearsal of those scenes, but perhaps every other one.

The matter of a proper place for this work bears a close relation to method, and therefore is taken up in this connection. It is not necessary that there should be a platform in the rehearsal room. In fact, for the earlier stages of the work, it is probably better that director and cast should be on the same level. There is an intimacy about this that can hardly be attained with the cast on a platform. The essential thing is that a space as nearly as possible of the size and shape of the platform to be used for the production be marked off somehow (chairs placed at corners, entrances, etc., serve the purpose more effectively than chalk-marks on the floor), and room left for entrance and exit at the proper points. Once this space is marked off and rehearsal begun, it is of the utmost importance to hold it inviolate from intrusion by anyone not supposed to be "on" at the time. For a player watching a scene in rehearsal to use the platform space as a thoroughfare must be regarded as a thing which is "not done." It may occasionally be necessary for the director himself to intrude on this space, but he should do it only with good reason and generally with an apology.

There should be room enough for players not on the platform at any given time to sit comfortably and watch the scene being rehearsed. It is important to provide chairs for this purpose. After the preliminary stages of the work it will be an advantage to have a room with sufficient depth so that the director can retire to some distance from the stage space at times.

Where the dramatic work in a church has developed to the point of having a "workshop" for the making of costumes, scenery, etc., this may naturally serve as the social center for the whole group during rehearsals.

Before beginning the first rehearsal without books, see to it that the prompter is in place, with his marked copy, and a pencil with which to indicate changes that may be made in positions or cues. It is of some importance that the director should determine at the start where the prompter will be placed during productions, and have him take a position with the same relation to the stage at every rehearsal. Players needing prompting are much more likely to become confused, and perhaps to look wildly around for the prompter, if they do not feel sure where he is. They should become accustomed to hearing his voice from one direction.

When all is ready, make sure, by a rapid question or two, that the players have the situation at the opening clearly in mind and that those who are to enter later have their cues. Finally, give a signal, wait for silence, and then give another signal to indicate the rise of the curtain (or the entrance of the first character, if no front curtain is to be used). The rehearsal is now "on." If the preliminary work has been thoroughly done, the players should feel that this is an event, almost an hour of solemnity. They should feel that from now on at any moment their Galatea may come alive. Indeed, this rehearsal often has a sort of breathlessness about it. It demands the most intense concentration from the director. He has already exercised his own dramatic imagination on the scene in question; he must now strive to understand instantly the varied manifestations of the dramatic instinct of others, encourage, develop, and lead it to free expression.

So far, so good. But it is quite possible for a director to follow the above procedure up to this point with a considerable degree of skill, and to be able to pass an examination on the fundamental principles of educational method, and yet to find himself utterly at sea when faced with an actual situation in rehearsal. And just here arises an inevitable difficulty in any textbook presentation of so vital, so infinitely varied a subject. For theory alone will not make it clear, and illustrations set down in print are apt to seem dogmatic and precise, as if a pattern were in-

tended. This risk must be taken, but the student is asked to remember that every situation offers a fresh problem which must be solved not according to rule but according to the realities with which he is faced; of which not the least important is the personal equation as it enters into the relationship between himself and the player.

For the convenience of the student the illustrations are chosen from one volume: a collection of short plays, as offering a greater variety of situations than would naturally occur in a single play. The book referred to is *Friends of Jesus,* by Lydia M. Glover.

The first illustration is from the play entitled "Love's Utmost"; Scene II, page 41. Abigail has just forbidden her sister Naarah to admit Jesus of Nazareth to the house, saying that it would be better that her injured child should die than that this "deceiver of the people" should cross their threshold. Naarah goes to the door and stands with arms outstretched in mute appeal to the unseen Presence without. As a light streams through the open doorway and shines upon the unconscious child, Abigail bends over him and then exclaims: "Naarah! Naarah! His eyes are opening!"

Now, the director has doubtless visualized this moment and feels that he knows exactly how Abigail ought to behave. Suppose, then, at this first rehearsal, Abigail turns back to the couch, as she finishes her earlier speech to Naarah, and (without any interval and obviously because she is so instructed by the stage-directions) leans over the child, her hands resting comfortably against her knees, like a small boy watching a ball game. (Incredible? Perhaps, but quite possible!) Suppose, further, that she then immediately looks up at her sister and exclaims in a loud voice: "Naarah! Naarah!"

Under these circumstances just what is the director to do?

First, if he is not already in complete possession of it, he must summon all the patience there is in him, and call up the reserves of his faith in humanity. Then, he must conquer the temptation to show the player how it should be done. Even an experienced director has to fight this out on the field of battle, over and over again. There will come days when one is tired, and this seems for the moment to offer an easy way out. Then, too, there are the times when one is working with a scene for which one has a peculiar fondness; one that has been so vividly experienced in one's own imagination that it seems there is only one "right" way of playing it. In such cases the temptation is almost overpowering. But the true educational director knows that to yield to it is likely to put farther off the player's arrival at a genuine characterization of his part—perhaps even to make it impossible.

What, then, *can* he do? Well, he may say, "Abigail, what made you lean over the child just now?" If, then, the player gives an answer showing that she has not sensed the dramatic quality of the moment, such as, "Why, Naarah asked me to watch him," he will reply: "Yes, but when you turned from Naarah just now your mind was full of bitterness against the Nazarene. You were defiant; you were ready to sacrifice the child to your pride and fanaticism. I wonder if you would relax from the natural attitude of defiance so quickly, unless your attention was attracted by something. What *was* it that you noticed? . . . Ah! his eyelids fluttered? . . . Well, then, suppose you take your last words to Naarah again, and then we shall see whether you really *see* his eyelids flutter."

At the next attempt there should be a real "contact" established with the dramatic environment; in other words, the life-process which culminates in Abigail's exclamation, "Naarah," etc., should be started. Abigail "sees" the child's eyelids flutter. Her immediate reaction to this "contact" is indicated in the stage direction: "Abigail bends close to her little one"; and this she probably does. But suppose that her hands still rest against her knees, or perhaps on the couch. The director may say: "But you are not sure yet what that flutter means; it might not indicate recovery, but something quite different. What is the first thing you want to know, about the child's condition?"

If the player does not know enough of illness to answer this question, another may contribute the suggestion that she probably wants to see if the fever is broken. How will she find out? By placing her hand on his forehead, yes. But if she then proceeds to do this hastily and boldly, the director may say, "Ah, but you do not know what you may find! His eyes have not opened; there was just that momentary flutter. Suppose you should find his forehead cold? Do you *dare* to make the test at once, or do you wait a moment, watching for another sign of life?"

It may be necessary to repeat this several times, in different words, but eventually the director should get an actual "investigation" by Abigail, with her hand hovering over the child's forehead, and every line of her face and figure expressing the conflict of hope and fear. This will not come because the player knows the *technique* of expressing such an emotion, but because the director has led her through the actual life-process; she has had a "vicarious experience" of Abigail's emotion.

We have not yet arrived, however, at the culmination of the process. Imagine, now, that Abigail, having given evidence of a genuine emotion of suspense for a moment, really experiences the step in the process

known as "identification," or "recognition," or, if one prefers a more academic term, "apperception." That is, she recognizes, from former experiences, the indications of returning consciousness in the movement of the child's eyelids. If the process thus far has been genuine, an emotional readjustment doubtless takes place automatically; the suspense is relieved by joy and hope. Some impulse toward expression will arise; and at this point the player is met by the imagination of the playwright, who has given her the *words* to speak: "Naarah! Naarah! His eyes are opening!"

Now these words are a perfectly natural expression of the impulse driving her to reach out for sympathy in the great revulsion of feeling which has just come to her; but the words alone are only one phase of the expression of this impulse. The very fact that a certain phase of the expression is "given," or dictated, sometimes interferes momentarily with the spontaneity of the life-process. The player remembers at this point that she is to speak certain words and, knowing that they are addressed to Naarah, she may turn her head to look at the player taking that part, as she speaks.

If someone says, "But nobody with much dramatic imagination would do that," it is freely admitted; but once more let it be remembered that we are not dealing simply with dramatic talent, but with ordinary, average young people, and that one of our principal aims is to *develop* dramatic imagination.

It might seem that the quickest way to obtain the natural expression here would be to say, "No, don't look up; keep your eyes on the child." Now this will almost certainly break the sequence of the life-process, because by this direction the player's attention has been diverted to *himself* and his own forms of expression. The desired end must be attained by *following* the life-process, not by interrupting it. The director might say, "But you are not sure, *yet,* that the child is really getting well; you have a new hope, but not assurance. Do you dare to miss a single movement, a single moment of this crisis?"

If on the next attempt Abigail keeps her eyes on the child, but fairly shouts into his ear, as she speaks to Naarah, the director might say, "Oh, will you not waken him too quickly, startle him, if you speak so loudly?" The player may answer, "But Naarah is on the other side of the room, looking out the door. I want to attract her attention somehow." "True," the director will reply; "you do want to attract her attention, but that is not so important to you as the child himself. If you are not looking at Naarah, you do not *know* whether she is looking at you or not. Perhaps she will see if you reach out a hand to her—oh, I know your

right hand is busy, but the left will do!—Anyway, you certainly do not want to frighten the child."

Unless the player is abnormally lacking in dramatic imagination, the next trial should reveal some manifestation, however slight, of a genuine impulse to reach out for Naarah to share the moment with her. The outward expression of the impulse may be abortive; so incomplete that the director knows it will not "reach" the audience. Abigail may do hardly more than to move her little finger in the direction of the other player.

This is another point in the process where many a director loses heart and gives up the attempt to follow educational method; in fact, he may lose heart and temper both. In reality, the slightest possible manifestation of a genuine impuse at this point should reassure the director that he is on the right path and give him fresh courage to proceed. But he must proceed along the same line, using positive suggestion, not negative. He should not let the player suspect his impatience if he feels it; he should, on the contrary, make the player feel that now she has attained something they have been working for. He may exclaim: "Ah! *now* we have it! But Naarah *is* some distance away; she might not notice a motion so slight as that. You'll have to *make* her see. She is not standing with her back toward you exactly; she can probably see, 'out of the corner of her eye' if you only reach out *far* enough.' "

The student may be wondering how long it will take to rehearse a whole play, if so much time is to be spent on one moment in it. The most obvious answer to this is that the moments chosen for illustrations are naturally of somewhat more than average importance in the action of the play. The one we have just been considering is, in fact, the dramatic climax of the piece. It therefore merits all the time necessary to make it convincing, even from the standpoint of the second objective: the effect on the audience.

But there is another answer. In the long run it will be found that the time spent in developing expression at a point like this is not wasted as regards the rest of the action. If Abigail has once had, in rehearsal, a true "vicarious experience" of this one moment, it cannot fail to enable her to enter with greater genuineness and spontaneity into the situation as a whole.

Moreover, while the director may have addressed no word to Naarah throughout the above passage, the player taking that part can hardly escape being influenced to some degree by the work done. She must listen to what is being said, since she also is concerned in the scene, and it is to be expected that when the scene proceeds, and she finally receives

her cue and hurries to Abigail's side, she will be more thoroughly immersed in the dramatic situation than she was before.

After a few such moments have been dealt with, patiently, thoroughly, and carefully, it will be found that other passages are carried along, to a considerable extent, by the sympathetic imagination evoked at these points of deepest intensity.

If, now, a director would say that he is not interested in trying to develop dramatic expression in persons who have so little imagination, the only answer to this is that he is, then, not interested in "Educational Dramatics," but in the directing of the semi-professional amateur, or the student who dreams of a stage career and craves professional instruction; that is, he desires to deal with dramatic expression as a conscious *art*. There is no objection to this in its proper place; but, in the opinion of the present writer, it is not a function of the church to conduct a training-school for actors. A director who has not the interest, skill, or patience to use the educational method, so that the power of the dramatic instinct (the universal impulse, not the specialized talent) may be utilized for the development of character, should seek a field of activity elsewhere than in the church or the Church School.

While there are dramatic directors who would not find this type of work interesting, a considerable experience in teaching classes in method at summer conferences of church workers has provided the writer with abundant evidence that there are many teachers in our Church Schools who, with even a small amount of training, would find their field of service greatly widened by the introduction of the dramatic element into their work and would, moreover, find a joy and satisfaction of which they had not dreamed.

Our second illustration is taken from the last play in the collection, "In His Strength," Scene I, page 70. Adah, the wife of Simon Peter, has just been telling her mother that he has appeared depressed for some time and that she is anxious about him. The mother goes out, and Peter enters, so absorbed in thought that he does not even notice Adah's presence. She is seated on the floor, grinding at a hand-mill, when he comes in. The stage directions are as follows: "She watches him curiously, and then, when he seats himself on bench, still oblivious of his surroundings, she goes over to him and kneels beside him." Then she begins to speak to him, saying, "Peter, my husband, you have been gone so long."

If, at the first rehearsal without books, Adah rises, with merely a careless glance in Peter's direction, and moves toward him without hesitation, the director may say, "You have doubtless been brought up to re-

spect the reserve of the man of the house. Why is it that you interrupt his meditations now, when he does not notice you?"

Another question or two may be necessary, but the fact will eventually be brought out that Adah has endured this uncertainty and anxiety as long as she can; that she has determined to solve the mystery, even at the risk of Peter's displeasure. The director may then say, "But before you run the risk of displeasing him you want to be quite sure, do you not, that there is still *occasion* for your anxiety? You do not wish to trouble him with questions if there is no need. How will you make sure? . . . By looking at him—yes. But it will take more than a glance. Is he still depressed, or only thoughtful? Is it grief, or remorse, for something that has happened, or is it fear of something in the future? . . . How can you tell? . . . If the difficulty is in the future, he is probably trying to foresee conditions and make plans to meet them. That means thought—reasoning: a very different state of mind from sorrow over an event that is past, and hence irrevocable. Now look . . . is Peter merely sorrowful, or is he struggling with a problem?"

It should be noted, again, that this questioning concerns both players equally, but in each case the attention is centered outside the self. Adah's attention is directed to Peter rather than to her own forms of expression; and the other player's attention is centered on the subject of Peter's thoughts. It is not necessary, in most cases, to tell him that if Peter is absorbed in thinking out a problem, there is doubtless a pucker between his brows; if he really begins to think, the pucker will appear automatically—or at least an intent, far-away look in his eyes. If Peter seems to need further help in establishing "contact" with the dramatic situation, remind him of the scenes he has witnessed in the last few days, and hours; the strange sayings he has heard from the lips of Jesus; the sense of bafflement he has experienced in trying to comprehend his Master; his hopes of the "Kingdom" and uncertainty as to their fulfillment. In other words, do not tell him, or show him, how to look, but *get him to thinking;* the natural physical expression will follow, as in real life.

To return to Adah, suppose, after her preliminary investigation, she moves rapidly toward Peter, with no hesitation. The director may check her at the first step with a quick: "Wait! Does he notice your movement? Yet you are not behind him exactly. Is it that he really does not see, or that he does not wish to be disturbed and so deliberately ignores you? How can you tell? It is likely that if he did see you move and decided to ignore you, he would be so curious to know how far you were going to go, that when you stop he will look up almost in

spite of himself. If, then, he does not look up, it means that he is very deeply absorbed in his thoughts, even more so than you had supposed. Does that make you more fearful about interrupting him? . . . Yes, but also more resolute to solve the mystery of his depression?"

Perhaps this is enough to suggest how the director may lead Adah through the process of "investigation" so as to get, naturally, the effect of alternate boldness and timidity, of mingled tenderness and dread, that she has probably visualized as a very charming bit of "business" at this point.

As a third illustration let us consider an instance of a sudden transition of mood and thought. In the last scene of "The Seeing Heart," page 23, Martha has just come in with the news that there is talk of crucifying Jesus, and Mary has assured her that Jesus is prepared for what is to come and does not fear it. She says, "He is so wrapped up in his thoughts of going to prepare a place for us that he does not dread the cross," etc. After this speech Martha exclaims: "Oh, why have I not kneeled more at his feet? He may not come this way again! Ah, me!" Then with an instinctive reversion to her habitual attitude of mind, she says: "But I must go. There are duties to be done." And she goes to attend to them.

If the player fails, at first, to make the transition clear and convincing, the director might say, "Martha, have you really caught a new vision of what Mary's friendship with the Master meant? Do you truly wish, for the moment, that you had spent more time at the feet of Jesus? . . . Then what makes you exclaim suddenly that you must go? . . . Ah!—you recalled some household task awaiting you?—a room to be swept, perhaps? And it has always been your habit to do such work as soon as you thought of it—in fact, to be doing *something* all the time. I wonder if you have a feeling that this person sitting still and doing nothing but thinking could not possibly be you—that if you are still yourself, you must be 'up and doing.' You feel, perhaps, that this quiet meditation is Mary's way, not yours. You are not an introspective, or self-analytical person at all; you are habitually absorbed in *things* rather than inner experiences. It is likely, then, that you are instinctively alarmed at the mere possibility of a change in your fundamental viewpoint, in your personality. The more limited people are in their contacts with the world, the more easily are they frightened by new experiences—especially new spiritual experiences. Your impulse is doubtless to break away from impending change in your habits of thought; to seek refuge from new ideas in long-established custom. But even as you express this impulse, do you wonder, for the first time in your life, per-

haps, just *why* you 'must go'? Is there in your mind the half-conscious thought that Mary's comradeship with Jesus may have meant more to him than your restless, bustling service? Are you asking yourself vaguely, 'To what end this ceaseless activity?' "

The above illustration concerns a subjective rather than an objective "contact"; that is, the stimulus that sets up the life-process is in the mind —a thought, a memory. The "investigation" is of an idea, not a physical object. It is therefore much more difficult to lead the player through the natural process; it may take longer to attain any result; but the impression made upon the player may often be deeper than that made by the more objective type of "vicarious experience."

CHAPTER XIV

GRADED DRAMATIC WORK IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Young People's Department (Continued)

Adult Department

Since the formal production is characteristic of this period, we should, before leaving the subject of method, consider briefly the actual preparing of a play for a public presentation. All the work described thus far under "Method" would be done if the play were merely being studied and rehearsed for the sake of the developing values for the players, without the thought of a public production as a necessary culmination of the process. Once a production of this sort has been determined upon, however, there are many things to be considered.

First, a Production Staff must be appointed. The size of it will depend upon the scale of the production. For a play with a large cast and elaborate settings, the following list of officers should be appointed:

1. *Stage director.* Responsible for all matters concerning the personnel of the cast and staff, such as attendance and promptness at rehearsals and productions, discipline at rehearsals and productions, substitution in case of absence of members of the cast, etc.

2. *Stage manager.* Responsible for all the mechanical aspects of the production, such as the preparation and setting up of scenery, training of the scene-shifters, curtain-manipulators, lights men, property man, call-boy (if one is needed), etc.; also for the preparing of cue-sheets for these persons, and for the orchestra conductor, or whoever is in charge of the music.

3. *Prompter.* Should be on duty at every rehearsal from the beginning. Responsible for keeping the rehearsal-book up to date, noting changes in grouping, and essential moves, as they may be determined.

Note:—The best method of achieving a production in which there is no prompting needed is to have a well-trained prompter on duty at *every* rehearsal. If the players have absolute confidence in their prompter, and know that his knowledge of the production is second only to that of the Educational Director, they are less likely to become nervous and forget their lines.

4. *Call-boy.* Responsible directly to the stage manager, but sta-

tioned near the prompter at production, since he must get the cues for the entrance of the characters from him.

Note:—Where an electric push-button system is installed, connecting the prompter's station with the dressing-rooms, the call-boy may possibly be dispensed with; but even in such cases it is a good idea to have a general errand-boy on hand to carry messages, etc.

5. *Property man.* Responsible for the assembling of the properties at rehearsals and productions; the distribution of them to the players; and the disposal of them afterward.

Note:—If there is no Art Director on the staff, this officer may also be responsible for the collecting or making of properties. And in cases where valuable properties are to be used for the production he may be requested to furnish practical substitutes for rehearsals.

6. *Wardrobe mistress.* In cases where there is a Costume Director, the wardrobe mistress is responsible only for the distribution of costumes to the players at dress rehearsals and productions, the receiving and checking of them afterward, and the packing and care of them when not in use. If the production is so simple as not to need a Costume Director, the wardrobe mistress may also be responsible for the collecting or renting of costumes, or may even be in charge of the making of costumes by volunteer workers.

7. *Electrician* (or Lights Director). Responsible for the practical carrying out of the general scheme for lighting drawn up by the Educational Director, or the Art Director, if there is one. He must, of course, understand electric wiring, the fire laws, etc. If he has also some knowledge of the technique of stage lighting, so much the better. He must train the lights crew, if others are needed to manipulate the lights.

8. *Music director.* Responsible, in consultation with the Educational Director, for the selection and arrangement of the music, both the incidental numbers, and that used during intervals between the acts, etc. He may also be the organist or pianist, or orchestra conductor. In other cases he may train and direct choruses, etc.

9. *Business manager.* Responsible for the managing of the finances of the production. He must approve all expenditures, pay bills, arrange for credit if necessary, etc. He is also responsible, generally, for the ticket sales, unless a special officer is appointed for this phase of the work. Even in that case the business manager is responsible to see that the plans are carried out, and that the ticket sales are likely to keep pace with expenditures. If a building is to be hired for the production, it is his duty to arrange this matter.

10. *Publicity man.* Responsible to make plans for publicity, and then to see that they are successfully carried out.

Note:—This is a very important office, and care should be taken that the person appointed to it understands the principal objectives of the production of religious drama. If he does not, the publicity is likely to give an entirely wrong impression of the program. The advertising should by its general character prepare the audience to come to the production in a state of mind favorable to the impressions it is desired to create.

Note:—Unless there is a special committee in charge of the printing of the programs, the responsibility for this rests upon the business manager. In some cases, however, he may delegate authority to the publicity man.

11. *Chairman of the Front of the House* (or House Chairman). Responsible for the safety and comfort of the audience; this means that he should make sure that the fire regulations are being complied with, in the matter of not overtaxing the capacity of the house, the seating of the audience (keeping the aisles clear, etc.), keeping exits unblocked, etc. Responsible also for the engaging and training of the ushers and ticket-takers, and for the distribution of the programs. In some cases he must also be responsible for the handling of the house lights, where the switches governing these are at the rear of the audience room.

The above officers make up the Production Staff. The different directors, in cases where there are several, may be regarded as making up a Directing Staff. This would include the Dramatic Director (generally referred to in this text as the Educational Director), the Art Director, the Music Director, the Costume Director, and possibly others in specific cases.

It must not be supposed that a staff of this size is necessary for every production. A short one-act play with a small cast may be put on with only two or three of the above-mentioned officers. It might, indeed, be said that the prompter is the one member of the production staff who is absolutely indispensable even for the simplest production. *The Educational Director should never attempt to prompt.*

3. *Finishing.* After each scene of the play has been developed, for characterization, along the line of the illustrations given above, the cast should be ready for the finishing work.

One session at least may be devoted to entrances, exits, climaxes, and difficult passages. At this rehearsal the main objective is to insure smoothness in the *running* of the play. It is hardly possible for a director to have too high an ideal in this respect. The cast should be made to feel that nothing less than perfection is satisfactory.

After this there should be a rehearsal of the whole play in one evening, in which the aim is to establish a sense of the continuity of the action, an understanding of the interdependence of the players, and a fresh realization of the movement and meaning of the play as a whole.

Then comes the first dress rehearsal, generally without make-up. The director must expect that some time will be occupied in the adjusting of costumes (if they are at all unusual) and consultation between the players and the wardrobe mistress (or Costume Director). Allowance should be made for this, but the director should not allow the cast to become entirely demoralized. He should insist on serious work in rehearsal by those who are ready.

A period at least should be given to the final polishing. In many cases, the director will spend a large part of the time for several days, at this point, in intensive work with individuals and small groups.

Then (if three dress rehearsals can be arranged) comes the second dress rehearsal, at which every detail that was found to require adjustment should be corrected, and in many cases, make-up would be used. (If the players are to put on their own make-up, and it is at all difficult, they should be given more than one opportunity to experiment.)

The final dress rehearsal should, in all possible ways, be the same thing as a production. The cast, and the production staff, should be given to understand that once the play is started, it is to *go on,* whatever happens —or fails to happen! If a few guests are invited, it will be a good thing for several reasons. It will enable the director, and the players, to find out whether they are making their lines audible and intelligible. It will put the players on their mettle; and, if the little audience is appreciative, it may encourage them.

The Educational Director's place at this rehearsal is in the audience. He should have no responsibilities behind the scenes. In other words, the success of the production now depends upon the work of each member of both cast and staff; and it is very important that they should be fully conscious of this. They should not depend on the director for any actual assistance. His moral support should be freely given. He will probably go behind the scenes during the intervals, to encourage the players, and to adjust any details, in setting, etc., which can be corrected at this time.

The ancient tradition that a bad dress rehearsal means a good production is one of the commonest excuses for careless, slip-shod work at this phase of a production. An educational director should never need to fall back upon its lazy encouragement.

In cases where the lighting is at all difficult to handle, or where

lights cues must be perfectly accurate, it will be best to have at least one lights rehearsal before the final dress rehearsal. If necessary, this may be held on the same evening as the final dress rehearsal, while the players are dressing.

The subjects of staging, lighting, costuming, etc., are not dealt with in this manual, since numbers of good books along those lines are available, and it was desired to stress, in this text, the factors in dramatic work which have special significance for moral and religious education. A few remarks may be made, however, as to certain general principles.

First, it is probably wise to aim for simplicity rather than for elaboration in the staging of most religious plays. This implies the use of suggestive effects instead of realistic portrayal. With two or three sets of sateen curtains, a set of large folding screens, a few extra "drapes" (to make tree-trunks, pillars, etc.), a set of pylons (even though they are home-made), and perhaps a few Oriental prints or tapestries, a group will be able to produce almost anything they might wish to do. In this type of production the lighting is naturally very important. But in the average church school assembly room or parish house auditorium two or three stereopticon lanterns placed at different points in the balcony will furnish sufficient light; and really charming effects (of sunrise and sunset, for example) may be produced with one or two sets of colored gelatine slides.

One caution should be given about costumes: it is important to have the costuming historically accurate when dealing with a biblical play; and ethnically or geographically accurate when dealing with the peoples of other lands in our own day.

The principle of simplicity is well to keep in mind, also, in the matter of make-up. Too little is better than too much.

Values.—Beyond those values already mentioned, dramatic work under educational guidance should tend to humanize the young person's interest in political, international, and industrial problems—in fact, all the varied aspects of social adjustment which have normally an appeal for him at this age. After impersonating a factory employee, and experiencing vicariously his struggle and perhaps despair, he will be able to see something more than a question of legal "rights" in the industrial conflict. After playing the part of a modern, progressive Hindu, earnestly working for the welfare of his people, but balked by the iron rigidity of the caste system, he will see a more personal meaning in the whole problem of caste.

We should not forget that it is from this group that there must

come the leaders of a decade or two hence. The real saviours of mankind are those who feel the value of the individual human being. Educational Dramatics is a method of developing the conviction of that value.

Adult Department

As regards the second objective of dramatics in religious education, the giving of a message to an audience, the strongest work in the whole Church School should be done by the Adult Department, with players who have attained to maturity, both of mind and heart. Unfortunately, the idea still prevails in some quarters that dramatics is for the young people and children, but not for mature men and women, excepting those who have special "talent." The simple fact is that there is hardly a normal man or woman to be found who will not enjoy this form of self-expression, *under educational guidance*, and benefit by it; and it may be added that from the director's standpoint, there are few joys equal to that of working with a human being with matured capacities for sympathy, understanding, appreciation, and emotion, but with many of his potential impulses in a constant state of inhibition, and his channels of expression blocked; leading him out of the repressions of his everyday personality into a freedom which, even though it be only temporary, is like a holiday for the spirit, and in many cases may mean a permanent release.

Motives.—Oftentimes one experience under an educational director is enough to convince a man or woman that the time spent in such work is well worth while; the self-development motive may then predominate for a time. But in the long run probably the most effectual motive, among mature men and women, is the altruistic one—the motive of service.

Time and Place.—Nothing need be added here to what was said under the Young People's Department. (See pages 132 and 133.)

Leadership.—One of the director's aims in working with an adult group should be the discovery of ability for directing. To this end it may sometimes be advisable to give a member of the group opportunity to experiment with the handling of a part of a rehearsal. Wherever special promise is shown along this line, an effort should be made to provide the person concerned with some special training—even if it be only ten days at a Summer School or Institute.

Method.—The section on method under the Young People's Department applies here also in every particular. In addition, it may be possible in some cases to revert to the method which was described as typical of the Senior Department—group creation of pageants.

There is many a woman whose family no longer demands her whole attention and who does not care for politics or clubs, and consequently

finds her interests narrowing, her horizon closing in. The research and creative work involved in writing an episode in a pageant might be a new and delightful experience for her, and result in a permanent broadening of her horizon. Moreover, a talent for playwriting may occasionally be discovered by this means; and the church has need for all the ability along this line that can be found. There is a constantly increasing demand for good plays, and very little material, as yet, with which to meet it.

Values.—The values of the work will vary according to the individual development of the players; there is hardly a single value that has been mentioned under any department that may not be exemplified in a group of adult players. In addition, the study and production of serious plays, or the preparation of pageants dealing with present-day conditions, should stimulate the workers to definite, constructive thought on many problems of society, the function of the church in the present age, etc. This will help greatly to develop intelligent public opinion in a community, and, in some cases, may result in the emergence of a leader of more than local significance. There are men and women who might never become interested in social problems by the ordinary methods of approach, who would never come to classes, forums, or discussion groups, or read serious books, who will, nevertheless become deeply absorbed in these very subjects when approached from the warmer, more human viewpoint of dramatic presentation.

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